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Learning in Society: Toward a New Paradigm

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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of lifelong learning is far from new, of course, and one can find quotations from thinkers and leaders throughout the ages in support of the idea.

Systematic support for lifelong learning -- a system of lifelong education -- is something else again and discussion of this is a relatively recent phenomenon.

In the modern period, many of us look back to the famous "1919 Report" in Great Britain, which spoke in these terms:[1]

> The necessary conclusion is that adult education must not be regarded as a luxury for a few exceptional persons here and there, not as a thing which concerns a short span of early manhood, but that adult education is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong.

Of course the 1919 Report is famous for that statement (it has been called the most frequently quoted statement about adult education in the English language) but is is also widely recognized that the report went largely unheeded in its day.

For some -- and the work of Paul Lengrand[2] is an eloquent expression of this -- the searing experiences of the Great Depression and the Second World War led to a new phase of thinking about the necessity for lifelong learning. It was not only the terrible events of those years but also the period of accelerating change -- technical and social --which emerged in the post-war period, which lent emphasis to these ideas.

For us in adult education, this thinking was brought into focus at the Second Unesco International Conference on Adult Education held in Montreal in 1960. The formal Declaration passed by the conference put it this way:

> Our first problem is to survive. It is not a question of the survival of the fittest; either we survive together or we perish together. Survival requires that the countries of the world must learn to live together in peace. "Learn" is the operative word.

And with special reference to adult education:

> Nothing less will suffice than that people everywhere should come to accept adult education as a normal, and that governments should treat it as a necessary part of the educational provision of every country.[3]

John Lowe, the leading scholar in these matters, summed up the effect of the Montreal Conference as follows:

> This was the first international assembly which, in its Final Report, set lifelong education as a goal for the future policies of governments.[4]

This fact was recognized also in the final report of the Tokyo Conference in 1972.

In the last twenty years, the idea of lifelong education has been taken up in many places. We can see at least three main lines of development which are relevant to our discussions here in this symposium, which may be summed up in three phrases: recurrent education, éducation permanente and lifelong learning.

Recurrent Education

It is not synonymous with lifelong learning in that it focuses on the years from mid-high school to job retirement. Its chief idea is the alternation of periods of work and education, made possible by a policy of paid educational leave, and aimed at a system in which the periodic alternation between work and education can be made without the individual suffering unduly in either setting. Recurrent education was developed in the Scandinavian countries, most notably in Sweden, and as we all know, has been taken up by the OECD and studied and developed as a policy alternative, over the last 15 years. It is an organizing or administrative concept, with strong economic and social implications.

Éducation Permanente

This may be coupled closely with lifelong learning, and like it, may be seen to have arisen from experience with adult education. Éducation permanente was taken up and developed by the Council of Europe. Denis Kallen says this about it:

> In the Council of Europe éducation permanente originated in the organization's ideas about the role of cultural policy in changing society. Permanent education was seen as a "strategy for social action", but with little reference to the economic dimension. Cultural policy was rather considered on its own merits.[5]

The other aspect to be noted about éducation permanente is its focus on the local community. The community or group is to have as nearly as possible complete control over its own educational programme. The watchwords are equalization, participation and what is referred to as globalization. Éducation permanente has been developed as a policy over the past 15 years or so and a great deal of local experimentation and reporting of experience have been carried out.

Lifelong Learning or Lifelong Education

Lifelong education and lifelong learning have been developed as concepts principally by Unesco. As has been mentioned, they came to the fore as ideals and as policy alternatives at the Unesco World Conference on Adult Education in 1960. Several documents were developed by Unesco in the ensuing decade in the elaboration of the concept, including an eloquent small book by Paul Lengrand published in 1970, entitled An Introduction to Lifelong Education. But the leading policy statement on lifelong education is the Unesco report of 1972, called in English, Learning To Be. It develops a policy based on humanistic assumptions, very positive in its point of view about human nature, and about the society of the future. The report calls for an evolution of public policy which will result in what is termed "a learning society".[6]

In the 1975 version of his book on lifelong education, Paul Lengrand states what he sees to be the principles of lifelong education:

> The need to assure continuity of education, in such a manner as to prevent the wearing away of knowledge.
>
> The adaptation of programmes and methods to the particular and original objectives of each community.
>
> The moulding of human beings, at every level of education, towards a kind of life in which evolution, change and transformation can find a place.[7]
>
> A large-scale marshalling and use of all means of training and information, going beyond the traditional definitions and institutional limits imposed upon education.
>
> The establishment of close links between various forms of action (technical, political, industrial, commercial, etc.) and the objectives of education.

With respect to the symposium we are to take part in over the next few days, there are two other factors which have led to its being held, and to the process we have engaged in.

Ever since the Third International Conference on Adult Education in Tokyo in 1972, and the publication of Learning To Be in the same year, the Sub-Commission on Education of the Canadian Commission for Unesco has taken a particular interest in the idea of lifelong learning. (Encouraged and supported by Jacques-V. Morin of the secretariat of the Commission, we had an active Task Force in the Commission which did what it could to promote an interest in lifelong learning and the Unesco report, for several years in the mid-seventies.) This process was continued when some of us put forward a resolution in the Sub-Commission which has eventually brought us to this event.

The second factor I would mention is the longstanding interest in these ideas by our colleague, Alan Thomas. "The Learning Society", as an idea and a memorable phrase, came into international prominence in 1972 as a result of Learning To Be. Fully eleven years earlier than that, Alan Thomas made a major address at a Canadian national, bilingual adult education conference here in Ottawa titled, "The Learning Society".[8] And throughout the sixties and ever since, he has continued to develop his ideas in this area. It is altogether appropriate, therefore, that we should have turned to Alan Thomas to develop a document which could serve as a starting point for our deliberations at this symposium. No Canadian has given more continuing thought and attention to the implications of lifelong learning in the lives of our people and our country. We are grateful to him for preparing such a useful and stimulating starting point for our discussions.

NOTES

1. The 1919 Report, Report of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction (U.K.), Nottingham, University of Nottingham, 1980, p. 5.

2. Lengrand, P., An Introduction to Lifelong Education, Paris, Unesco, 1970 & 1975.

3. Kidd, J.R. (Ed.), Learning and Society, Toronto, CAAE, 1963, p. 11 - 12.

4. Lowe, J., The Education of Adults: A World Perspective, Paris/Toronto, Unesco/OISE, 1982, p. 10.

5. Kallen, D., "Recurrent Education and Lifelong Learning", in T. Schuller & J. Megarry (Eds.), Recurrent Education and Lifelong Learning, London, Kogan Page, 1979, p. 51.

6. Faure, E. et al. Learning To Be, Paris, Unesco, 1972.

7. Lengrand, P., An Introduction tc Lifelong Education, Paris, Unesco, 1970, 1975, p. 72.

8. CAAE/ICEA, National Conference on Adult Education, Toronto/Montreal, CAAE/ICEA, 1961.

1. NEW APPROACHES TO LEARNING

LEARNING IN SOCIETY

- A Discussion Paper -

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LEARNING IN SOCIETY

- A Discussion Paper -

Introduction

The increasing world interest in "learning", represented for example by the recent publication of "No Limits to Learning"[1] by the "shock-troops" of the Club of Rome has two principal sources.

Intellectually, it was the International Commission for the Development of Education (The Faure Commission) that clarified and legitimized the shift of attention from "education" to "learning" that had begun a decade earlier. Faure and his associates had been commissioned by UNESCO to examine the results of the enormous and unprecedented investment in education engaged in by nearly every country in the world since the early 1950s. According to the Faure Commission's Report, "Learning to Be" published in 1972,[2] the results were mixed, with only a few of the anticipated achievements clearly apparent. Other results, such as the existence of hundreds of thousands of unruly and rebellious students, and thousands of discontented teachers had not been anticipated at all.

However, the Report drew two major conclusions, neither of which seems to have been fully appreciated. The first was that it was not a mistake to invest heavily and consistently in education as a means of development, but it was an error to concentrate that investment exclusively on the education of the young. In other words, the Report laid to rest one of the most cherished illusions of the West, that you can bring about positive and controlled change in a society by concentration on the education of the young.

The second conclusion was that the significant factor in change and development, individual and social, was not the provision of educational resources and the associated "delivery systems" but the capacity of human beings, of any age, to learn. In examining all types of societies, all of them engaged in the processes of major change, the members of the Faure Commission observed that learning seemed always to outstrip efforts to educate, both in volume or frequency and in outcome. It would be, therefore, more productive to focus attention on learning, on its true nature as an activity in which individuals engage, its social role and function and its management, rather than on education which plays an important but limited role in directing the potential of learning. To support this contention, the Faure Commission proposed that the study of learning, heretofore a wholly-owned subsidiary of psychology, should be accorded an independent place, as a field of study under a title of impeccable origin "Mathetics". The Report pointed out that contributions to theory and practice related to learning were being made by many more fields than psychology; for example, chemistry, neurology, physics and others.

For many who had been pursuing this line of discovery, the conclusion was more than welcome. In short, it proposed a revolution of "Copernican" dimensions with the proper sun, "learning", in the centre of the universe. The concern for learning as a lifelong activity allows a more inclusive and accurate perspective from which to understand and analyse modern society. In fact, the Report suggested the dazzling prospect of "Mathetics" eventually assuming the role once occupied by Theology, as "Queen" of the sciences.

The second source of the interests stems from the practical concerns of many governments and large organizations in the world, which were coming to the same conclusions. The technically advanced societies in particular, but not exclusively, have discovered that even for the maintenance of their societies, they are increasingly dependent upon learning, that is, upon learning undertaken by increasing numbers and types of individuals in their populations, over longer periods of their lifetimes - learning which cannot be accomplished by means of exposure to educational resources in the first twenty years of life. All societies have always been dependent for their survival on the learning capacities of their members, but historically that reliance has taken the form of dependence upon a relatively limited amount of learning on the part of the vast majority of citizens, and a high degree of learning among a relatively small elite. The way in which access to learning has been managed or controlled has been the invisible stuff of history. Now that is all changing.

In addition, the same governments and organizations have discovered that to effect any deliberate change in their societies, they must engage the learning abilities, and the will to learn among present generations of adults. They, in the company of the "developing" countries, have discovered that they cannot wait for the children, however relentlessly exposed to systematic education as children, to grow up. Therefore, what is not learned by adults, as well as what is learned that may contradict or compete with desired directions of change or development, has become of paramount concern to all governments. The problems implied in this concern are multiplied in "pluralist" societies, though it can be argued that in such societies there are a commensurate number of benefits to be gained. By definition, pluralist societies stimulate diverse opportunities for learning. There are more diverse stimuli and models for behaviour to be learned from. In consequence there is more competition among aspirations for particular versions of the present and future. It is the task of the government in such societies to mediate among the competitive results of this learning, and in addition to try to provide sufficient stimuli for learning that will result in sufficient common learning for the State to survive. Until recently the industrialized countries in particular believed that a sufficient common foundation could be accomplished exclusively by the compulsory education of the young. However, the increasing dependence on adult learning, as the basis of economic survival, means that all lessons may have to be continuously relearned. Lebanon might be cited as an example of a situation in which such common learning cannot be provided; Canada as an example of a situation in which the success in providing such learning is being put to an extreme test. While pluralist societies present this kind of continuous risk, they also provide, because of the potential variety in outcomes of learning, more potential solutions to the problems faced by the society.

There is perhaps some irony to be found in the fact that the heretofore small number of self-conscious individual and institutional advocates of "lifelong" learning, or of "continuing education" have been acting as much in the interest of the society, and increasingly of the State, as they have in the interest of the individual. Most of these visible advocates and providers have been concentrated in the public sector, and in "educational" agencies. However, it has been apparent for some time now, to governments and the more enlightened public providers, that adult learning of the scope and type required by all modern societies cannot be provided entirely, or even predominantly, from public institutions and by public finance. The growth of "private" systems of training and education in industry, the armed services, hospitals, government departments, in fact in all enterprises of any size, which taken together rival the public system in number of learners, programme resources and expenditures, is evidence enough of the dependence of the society as a whole upon adult learning. Canadian managers are going back to school. Worried by foreign competition and confused by a fast-changing business scene, they are rushing as never before to up-grade their skills at in-house training programmes, outside seminars, part-time university courses and personal self-improvement courses embracing everything from deep breathing techniques and Zen, to Yoga, self-hypnosis and dressing to impress . . . today more than a hundred million a year is being spent on managment training . . . three years ago the figure was sixty million.[3] An important aspect of this development is that while the State has come to recognize and to support this wide diffusion of response to learning, the formal educational establishment has not. By and large, its members continue to behave as though they were the only custodians of the capacity to learn, the sole trustees of the means of directing that capacity, which is so vital to the society. It is of the greatest importance that some institutions, other than or in addition to the State, accept the increasing diffusion, not just of knowledge or expertise in our societies but of the management and direction of learning, and provide the critical leadership required by these developments.

The Nature of Learning

Learning is an activity of astonishing proportions. While we are learning more every day about its physiological, psychological, and sociological characteristics, little is understood about how it functions in society. Why do some individuals learn some things, while others in apparently similar circumstances do not? Why does one individual respond with a willingness to learn under some circumstances, and not under others where the need seems the same? Why do some individuals learn comfortably in educational environments, while others learn faster and apparently more effectively in non-educational settings?

Despite these unanswered questions, there are some assumptions regarding the nature of learning that can be made, and upon which attempts to manage learning for the benefit of the individual or the society or both must be based. The intent of this entire paper is to try to bring these assumptions and the means by which our societies attempt to manage learning into some focus, and to provide some approaches for maintaining that focus.

Learning is an individual activity. Groups, organizations, corporations, collectivities of any kind, do not learn. They may grow, develop, change or decay, but they cannot be said to learn. To describe such collective developments as "learning" pushes anthropomorphism to absurdity, and robs the concept of learning of most of its substantive meaning. In addition, it appears that to impose the concept of learning upon groups is a totalitarian impulse which conceals the true source of the potential for learning and places an arbitrary limit on individual freedom and responsibility with which the capacity to learn is inextricably bound.

Learning is an activity, it is not a possession, nor is it the content of books or libraries or other "data banks". Though the language is often confusing in use, it must be accepted that learning is what an individual does; other phenomena with which the work is frequently associated are only outcomes of learning. The confusion of learning with the results or outcomes of learning is a common error, an error that contributes to the confusion in understanding its nature. A current example of such confusion can be found in the Club of Rome's recent publication, "No Limits to Learning".[4]

Learning is associated with almost all human characteristics and activities. That is to say that nearly every significant human characteristic is modifiable by that individual. Those that are not, such as chronological age, or place of birth, or colour of skin provide the definitions for the most basic of all human rights deserving the protection of the State. Those characteristics that are subject to being learned touch on every facet of the life of a society, and the interest of the State, and are subject to constant negotiation between the individual and the State.

"He who pays the piper, calls the tune", the axiom of a commercial society, only applies with any purity if the piper knows how to play the tune. If he does not, then "he" must purchase a tune the piper does know how to play, find another piper who knows how to play the tune he wants, or enter into the sort of negotiations which will result in the piper learning to play the tune. The latter circumstance reflects the conditions applying to most States and governments, who are bound to a finite number of pipers by other than purely commercial relations.

Learning cannot be compelled. That is to say, an individual cannot be forced to learn something exclusively determined by another person or persons. While there are reported examples of behaviour acquired under duress of various kinds, the evidence also supports the fact that the imposed behaviour is not all that the coerced individual learns. Most of the additional leaning in these cases is not intended or planned for by the teacher. A simple and recurrent example is that of the student who can be compelled to succeed in learning to perform complex mathematical functions, but at the same time learns to hate the subject, the teacher, and even the school; accomplishments that were not intended.

Learning, therefore, must be won by whoever wishes it to occur in another. That is to say, the desired learning, which requires attention and effort by the learner must be seen to be worthy of that attention and effort, worthy in terms of the nature of the benefits to be derived from that learning, and in terms of who, including the learner, will share those benefits. The capacity for learning is not a tap that can be turned off and on subject to the needs or wishes of some external authority.

Learning is cumulative in its effects, the most important of which is to generate further learning. No external stimulator can anticipate the precise outcome of any exposure of an individual to an opportunity to learn, either in that event or in the event of subsequent learning. Neither can the learner know for certain what meaning his or her life will acquire as a result of learning something previously unknown.

Some Social Consequences

There are two major occasions associated with learning with unavoidable social consequences. The first is when some member of a society learns something that no one else has apparently ever known. Historically associated with discovery, or invention, and apparently a product of random individual imagination and random circumstance, modern societies now try to "manage" this sort of learning on a large scale, in and out of educational agencies, in the form of research. The second, the more simple and widespread, consists of the occasion when an individual learns something that he or she has never known before; something that has been learned by others. Depending upon the circumstance, the total change which learning anything involves for every individual may be simply assimilated by that person and by those around him or her through a series of normal expectations, or it may have revolutionary consequences. There is no way to predict the outcome with any assurance.

Talleyrand observed that "you can do anything with bayonets except sit on them". The same is true for the capacity to learn. Societies that must depend for their survival upon vastly increased learning upon the part of vastly increasing numbers of citizens must accept the consequences of unleashing this "sorcerer's broom". They must not simply allow but must actively maintain greater openness and flexibility so that unexpected results, unexpected learning on the part of a group of individuals not expected to learn some things, or unexpected things learned by everyone, can find room for expression. For example, in the mid-thirties few English-speaking Canadians anticipated that the Province of Quebec would experience the "French" renaissance that began to develop in the fifties, or the consequences of that renaissance for the structure of Canadian confederation. The turbulent learning that the developments involved for the citizens of Quebec necessitated a great deal of commensurate learning for other Canadians if the existing state was to be maintained.

Learning then, is a voluntary, individual act, which occurs each time a member of a society comes to know something, to be able to do something, or to be able to feel something he or she could not previously. It does not matter whether, any other individual has or has not learned something similar. Specific learning cannot be coerced, it must be won, and no one can with any accuracy predict the outcome of any learning. The only true measure of the success or value of any act of learning is whether it contributes to further learning.

The Management of Learning

The freedom to learn has always been a right of the democratic State. Only recently has that freedom become equally a necessity for all citizens of any age. Keeping the balance between those two facts is what is implied by the "management of learning", and the problems associated with achieving that balance grow increasingly formidable.

However, it is of increasing importance for us to understand how learning is managed, or at least how States and their governments attempt to manage it. Not only is the perspective of "learning" a useful analytical tool for understanding all facets of modern societies, there is also a pressing concern to see clearly and consistently the meaning of political decisions for learning at any particular time.

The increasing dependence on learning by the modern State puts new power in the hands of individuals and groups of individuals. It also increases the fragility of relationships between the citizen and the State, and between citizen and citizen. It has the potential for improving those relationships because it maximizes a peculiarly human dimension, the capacity for learning. But it also necessitates the maintenance of a new balance in society, with the possible release of individual energy, imagination, and trust on one hand, and the possibility of manipulation, deceit and cynicism on the other.

It is particularly important for those who have championed the causes of lifelong learning and continuing education, in or out of public institutions, to understand the new context which is growing, which has grown up around their efforts. Having been witnesses to learning by adults, and having succeeded in persuading other individuals and groups to do likewise, they now must enlarge that function into a systematic scrutiny of, and wherever possible, influence on, the shaping of public policy.

The management of learning in any society is immensely complicated, as complicated as the nature of learning itself. While it is to be found in almost every individual and social activity, such as participating in organized voluntary activity to bring about some social change, or by purchasing the materials to construct your own television set, the most productive area to examine for comprehensive understanding is that area which best reflects the constant negotiation over learning that occurs between citizens, groups and citizens, and the State. In turn, the most immediately accessible indication of the dynamics and outcomes of such negotiation is to be found in legislation and the procedures related to legislation, such as court actions and judicial decisions.

Even with a focus of attention on legislation there are considerable problems. One might expect that investigation of legislation devoted to the provision of "educational" services would provide the essential information. If that were the case, then we could leave the task to those interests already concerned with "school law" and the related Acts dealing with the creation of post-secondary agencies and associated matters. Even that enterprise has become complicated since it has become necessary to deal with recently emerging aspects of labour law regulating collective bargaining and comparable matters affecting teachers and professors. Few individuals seem to have realized, for instance, that the emergence of such legislation in recent years has profoundly affected the matter of "who will be the teachers" in all the societies in which it has emerged. The freedom to teach is inextricably related to the freedom to learn, and insufficient attention has been paid to the more recent effects of one upon the other. For example, the development of collective bargaining at all levels of education in Canada has created problems with respect to the employment of part-time instructors, a traditional mainstay of adult education. The amount of specialized learning taking place outside the formal institutions of education means that no such institution can possibly employ on a full-time basis representatives of all such learning. Unless the issues of security and equity involved are settled in ways that are novel to traditional collective bargaining, students will be increasingly denied exposure and access to many types of knowledge and experience.

However, the provision of "educational" resources is only one response, albeit a major one, to the capacity for learning. In recent years most societies have been reducing, at least comparatively, their "educational" responses, and turning to other means of encouraging and regulating learning. In fact, it is the distinction between these responses and the tensions generated by decisions regarding them that provide the major basis for truly understanding how learning is being managed. Therefore, it is necessary to examine all the legislation in a society, to the extent one can, with respect to the consequences of each Act for the management of learning.

Different Responses to Learning

All societies respond to learning in four ways. They may permit it, in the sense that general rules exist, for example, freedom of speech and freedom of association, which provide the basic foundations for maximizing all kinds of human learning. Individuals may say what they wish, in any company, temporary or permanent if they wish, unless it is expressly forbidden by the law. The value of a system of "common law" in supporting the freedom to learn becomes evident in this perspective. Secondly, societies may actively encourage some forms of learning by means of providing specific resources in support of it, such as libraries, museums, art galleries, and more recently educational television stations and wilderness reserves. Learning in this case is encouraged without specific concern for the outcome other than belief that it will be of benefit to the individual and perhaps more distantly to the society. However, the outcomes are shaped in the sense that certain kinds of resources, books, or pictures are provided free of direct cost to the individual, thus influencing the means by which learning will occur. There is in addition some control over what books and pictures will be provided, usually exercised by some public authority established by legislation. The recent emergence in the industrial societies of museums of science and technology indicates additional areas of significant learning that have been accepted by those societies. The same can be said of the increase in the number of planetaria. However, the lack of comparable resources for the provision of access to learning associated with radio, television and film in most societies indicates that despite their prevalence in everyday life they have not yet been accepted as means of learning of sufficient importance to merit this kind of investment.

The third class of activity the society may be involved in is the active direction of learning. Here are found all of the educational agencies, either supported financially from public funds, and/or related in some way to the major control that the State exercises over learning and certification.

Certification, a brand of licensing, is the principal means by which the State regulates learning. It does so by encouraging specialization related to certification, and by controlling the freedom of individuals to apply the results of their learning in the society. Educational agencies, some of which have the power of certification themselves, provide in varying degrees a kind of quality control with respect to supply of licensed practitioners. Such agencies are often associated with research, another systematic and very specific aspect of the management of learning, though the days when they were the chief or only source of such services, in most advanced societies, have long passed.

The recent growth of concern among these agencies, professional associations, and the State for the encouragement and control of learning among specialized practitioners beyond the learning by which they gained entry to professional practice is one example of the increasing dependence of the society upon learning. Some professions, most notably dentists, have obtained legislation compelling their members to participate in a designated number of hours of continuing professional education, each year.

The fourth way a society may respond to learning is to proscribe it. All societies at one time or another have engaged in trying to eliminate some outcomes of learning. A dominant example in most, but not all contemporary societies, is the learning associated with the non-medical use of drugs. Other examples are learning associated with religious sects. States are rarely successful in eliminating particular learning with particular outcomes. In most cases, they manage to contain it by driving it underground or by driving its adherents from the society. If, however, what is being learned, that is the outward manifestations, and the way it is being learned, conform more truly to the nature of learning than anything the existing State has to offer, then it will generally triumph no matter what the State does to impede it.

Major Clusters of Decisions

Given the context of four classes of response to learning, it is possible to provide a framework for identifying the major clusters of decisions around which the constant negotiation between the individual citizen and the State over learning takes place.

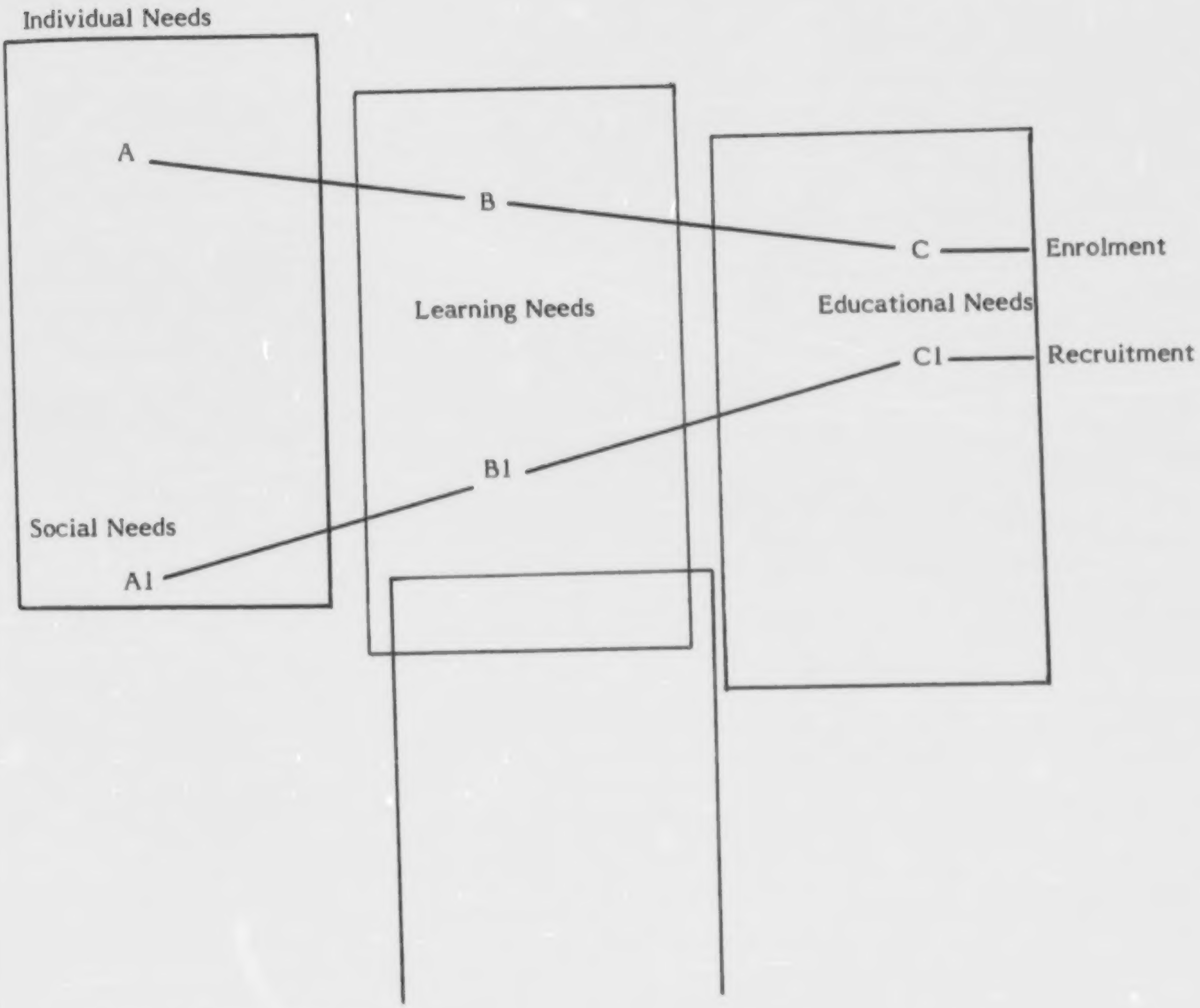
The diagram on page 25 provides a means of identifying those clusters, and thereby a means for grouping and classifying legislation which is the formal embodiment of such decisions.

Individual Needs. All individuals have needs. While the exact physiological or psychological nature and function of these needs remains obscure, we can, for our purposes, accept the model of the individual devoted to maintaining a satisfactory, "rewarding" relationship with his or her environment. To do so requires constant activity, involving a never-ending sequence of choices. Depending upon the degree of development of the individual and the "sophistication" of the environment, the choices will be simple or complicated but they will be choices nevertherless. In attempting to meet certain needs, individuals (A) may decide one or more needs can only be met by changing themselves, that is by learning something. Not much is known about just how this decision is made, or what the factors involved in it may be. It is apparent, however, that a substantial influence in making such a decision is the behaviour and advice of other people. Having identified a learning need, the individual (B) is faced with a further set of decisions to make. He or she may decide, as most individuals do,[5] to make use of the many and diverse resources for learning what is needed to be learned. One may consult a friend or an expert; take a book from a library; visit a museum; write to some resource centre or another. What is important about this decision is that the learner remains in control of the entire process. This person decides where to go for help, whom to consult, how much time to spend, and how much money to devote to the pursuit. Perhaps of the greatest importance will be the decision of when learning is satisfactory and then to decide how to demonstrate that learning to oneself and perhaps to others. All of these activities, including the knowledge that one has consciously and deliberately altered oneself, will remain essentially private. Some other people, including perhaps the employer, may be pleased and admire the accomplishment; some may be jealous, but there will be no public reward, no official designation, no certification, that learning has actually taken place. Under some circumstances, the individual may take this learning and apply for such certification, as is the case with obtaining a licence to drive a car. However, this type of relationship between independent learning and certification generally only applies to the accomplishment of relatively low-level skills that are used by substantial numbers of citizens.

The individual may, however, decide that what is to be learned can only be accomplished by seeking the formal resources of the system of education (C). In this case, the learner seeks out the nearest, relevant education agency, applies for admission to a pre-established programme, pays a set fee, and attends regular classes at stated times, under the direction of a certified teacher. In short, the individual has surrendered the right to decide how to learn, in part what to learn, when the learn, and how much to pay. Perhaps of the greatest significance however, is the surrender of the right to decide when and how well one has learned what had been out to be learned. In return, concentrated resources of various kinds have now become accessible. These could be in the form of other students pursuing

How Learning is Managed

Critical Decisions


Individual Needs
A
B
C
Enrolment
Learning Needs
Educational Needs
C1
Recruitment
B1
Social Needs
A1

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the same or similar goals; experienced, knowledgeable and supportive teachers; and libraries, teaching aids and other equipment that may be essential to the accomplishment in mind. In addition, for surrendering the right to a personal evaluation the learner receives, if successful, a certificate that the teaching agency and other similar agencies and employers will accept without further testing of the acquired skills.

What has just been described is, of course, the outline of the role of being a student, a role created by educational agencies, at least in its present form. It is the conventional role for learning, but it is not the only one, and it is not the dominant one. In fact, after nearly a hundred years of maximizing the importance of this role as the exclusive vehicle for learning, it may be beginning to decline in importance.

State Needs. On the lower line of the diagram, the decisions are similar, though they are associated with activities such as legislation, massive expenditures of public funds, the construction of imposing buildings, the creation of huge cadres of professional workers such as teachers, and the maintenance of complicated systems of regulation and control.

All States have needs (AI), in the sense of having to meet the collective demands of their citizens with whatever resources exist. At any time a State may designate some needs as learning needs (BI). In this case, the goals of the government cannot be met unless some members of the citizenry are willing to alter themselves through learning. Or the citizens themselves may have identified learning needs which they wish the State to support. If the needs are of a general nature, for example, those involving cultural or artistic satisfactions, the State will likely respond to them as learning needs and provide for them through various means, such as the construction of museums or libraries, or the subsidizing of a symphony orchestra. In these cases, the resources are provided by the State, and access is regulated by means of fees for admission, or hours of availability. However, there are no specific outcomes established, other than the fact that a reasonable number of citizens would seek to learn something to their own satisfaction from these resources.

However, if the needs are more pressing and of a more explicit nature, such as the provision of skilled workers of various kinds, the State will identify the learning needs as educational needs (CI) and move to engage in all of the activities associated with educational endeavours. Formal institutions will be created with groups of professional employees associated with them, methods for the provision of specific educational experience will be developed, and standards of performance and achievement will be established. Except in the case of the young, the State is not likely to compel attendance, but it will engage in a good deal of persuasion. Incentives of various kinds will be applied to encourage individuals to enrol in formal programmes, either by rewarding the agencies for attracting more students, or by rewarding the students directly for registering for programmes. In most countries, both systems are usually in operation simultaneously.

Recently, governments have become skeptical about the result of exclusive resort to educational solutions to learning problems, and alarmed by the high costs of those solutions. Increasingly, they have been turning to a subsection of BI, in which the responsibility for bringing about the desired learning is delegated to a non-educational agency in the society whose interest in such learning is highly specific, and whose normal activities are regarded as the most effective means of accomplishing such learning. An example of such a decision in Canada, is the decision of the Federal Government to delegate the bulk of labour education to the labour movement itself. There are many other such examples to be found as in tax relief for employers willing to carry out specific kinds of vocational training. In most of such cases these agencies have already recognized their dependence upon learning among their employees and embarked on substantial programmes of their own. Assistance from the State usually simply provides for expansion of existing programmes, as well as representing the interest of the State and presumably the entire society in what the agency is doing in meeting learning needs. There are a large number of complex issues arising from these decisions, not the least being the relationship between these activities and those of the formal system, which are usually either non-existent or of a competitive nature. Nevertheless, they are beyond the scope of this paper.

Legislating Learning

While none of the categories deal precisely with the nuances of the multitude of relationships involved in managing learning, they do serve to allow us to identify and classify the significant legislation. They also serve to provide a primitive evaluation of such legislation in terms of its effectiveness in dealing with the kind of learning it is intended to deal with.

For example, in restangle A-AI, we can find the generic legislation related to basic freedoms to learn and to teach, freedoms that underlie the existence of any reasonable, consistent negotiation between the State and its citizens regarding what should or should not be learned, and with what degree of support. Some of these freedoms will be enshrined as rights in charters or constitutions, some in ordinary legislation. In some respects almost all cannons in this classification have some bearing on learning, though they are not often seen in this light. What for example is the proper relationship between the freedom to learn and the freedom to teach? Should each of them be the subject of legislation, and how are they related to licensing, or membership in bargaining units, which have rapidly come to be definitions of who the nation's teachers are? Does the freedom to teach mean reasonable access to teaching resources supplied by the public, and what does reasonable mean in these circumstances?

In rectangle B-BI, we can locate a variety of Acts providing for public agencies that supply one sort of resource or another. How is their control and management related to the fact that they are learning resources? Who should control the sort of resources they provide and the basis on which they provide them? Are they being managed according to the terms of their establishing Acts? What sort of resources are missing from the range of agencies? To what degree should they remain passive resources for those who wish to use them, and to what degree should they be managed and funded to attract new users? How should their funding be related to agencies providing formal education? What sorts of factors are likely to be operative in those decisions? What are the trends with respect to individual and collective support of these agencies in comparison with the educational agencies?

In the sub-rectangle B-BI often the most interesting examples of learning management are to be found, if indeed they can be found at all. Often huge expenditures in terms of foregone revenue for the purpose of supporting the delegation of responsibilities for meeting learning needs are concealed in Tax Acts or regulations, that on the face of it, seem to have nothing to do with learning. In addition, provision for meeting learning needs are to be found buried in Acts relating to an immense variety of purposes. In these cases, such questions arise as how are these activities regulated or monitored? How are they related to formal educational activities, and are they actually meeting the learning needs identified? Do they meet more effectively than if they were handled by the formal educational authorities? In some cases simply identifying and cataloguing the provisions is an interesting and exacting task in itself.

In the rectangle C-Cl can be found all of the deliberately "educational" pieces of legislation, as for example, those establishing providing agencies, establishing labour relations for instructors in those agencies, and those providing a variety of types of financial support for such agencies. While this would appear to be the simplest area of legislative behaviour related to learning, to understand it does present its own kinds of complexities. It remains reasonable to examine such legislation, that is legislation establishing educational providing agencies from the point of view of the degree to which the structure of the body is primarily designed for the support of learning. This becomes particularly cogent in examining the new varieties of labour legislation that have appeared for the governance of labour relations in educational enterprises. In these cases, the basic patterns of such labour relations have been drawn from areas where learning has not been the prime concern. There is further complexity, in federal states, particularly in Canada, where the financial provisions for education exist at both the federal and provincial levels. This leads to complications of such dimensions that it is frequently impossible to tell who is paying for what. Knowledge of the means and procedures related to how learning is financed in any society would seem to be a prime requirement of intelligent participation in its management.

The Question of Certification

In this classification, we find the principal instruments of certification, usually delegated by the State to various providing agencies. However, current debate about whether certification ought to be attached to teaching agencies, or applied by some independent body, as it is in the case of medical practice, raises further interesting questions, questions both of the appropriateness of the particular policy involved and questions of how existing policies are supported legislatively and managed.

The issue of the independence of the certifying power may mean that certification can be utilized in relation to provisions applying in B-Bl, where the State manages or delegates the management of the certifying power, without any particular regard for how the certifiable skills or knowledge are acquired. The advantages and disadvantages of this practice slumber just below the level of most educational arguments and occasionally burst into flame.

It is in the tensions between the resort to responses, characteristic of B-Bl or C-Cl, that the bulk of the policy argument rages. Often, however, the exact nature of the advantages or disadvantages is not clearly understood except by the most immediate interests, and equally often little care is taken to clarify it.

We have concentrated upon the lower line of the diagram in terms of the characteristic decisions that appear in the various points and some of the analysable consequences. It is, of course, of even greater importance to understand the nature of decisions taken by individuals represented along the top line, but it is much more difficult to describe and understand them. Some things are known about those decisions, particularly as represented in the work of Allen Tough and his associates. In addition, the now outdated, but still important study of Johnstone and Riviera, Volunteers for Learning,[6] and the more recent study by Waniewicz, The Demand for Part-Time Learning by Adults in the Province of Ontario,[7] provide further clues. However, so far, studies of behaviour associated with the top line, and decisions anticipating behaviour made along the bottom line have, for the most part, been undertaken completely independently of each other. Experience in the 1960s, a heyday for public school adult education in Canada, suggested that provision of greater resources for adults, mostly characteristic of those to be found in C-Cl, seemed to result in more adults moving from B to C in terms of their learning decisions. We have no idea what effect C-Cl decisions have upon adults at point A. It is unquestionably better to have more learners associated with formal institutions than to have them pursuing their learning in their own way? What is the long range effect in terms of the likelihood of participating in learning at all of investment in resources associated with B-Bl in contrast to investment in resources associated with C-Cl? We know that western governments seem to have been transferring their preferences from C-Cl to B-Bl in recent years despite the active opposition of the considerable interests invested in maintaining agencies and practices associated with C-Cl. Which choice is the better one for the maximization of learning, within the context asserted by this paper? There are powerful reasons why we should understand the contrasting consequences of these different decisions.

Voluntary Organizations

A primary example of the constant negotiation over learning characteristics of A-Al is to be found in the role and status of voluntary organizations in any society. It is quite clear from results of research devoted to voluntary activity that an immense amount of learning is undertaken and accomplished by adults who join together with some degree of organization in order to accomplish specific objectives. These objectives may be of a very private nature, such as those pursued by the almost limitless numbers of small self-help groups that exist in Canada or they may be of a public nature, such as those represented by the substantial numbers of health, cultural, and athletic associations. In every such case there are tasks to accomplish, and the members set out to learn how to accomplish them. It is likely that far more adult learning is undertaken and achieved in the role of "member" of a group of some kind, than is ever undertaken and accomplished in the more formal self-conscious role of "student".[8] Therefore, the relationship between any one or all of these groups and the State is of great significance with respect to the management of learning.

In Canada, unless a group is overtly or covertly seditious or treasonable in intent, it is permitted to exist and to recruit members if it so chooses. If it engages in commercial activities, as a "not-for-profit" organization it will usually have to establish some form of corporate legal existence, and abide by existing regulations for such bodies. However, if it sets out to contribute to some social good, that is if its objectives are of a public nature, then the group may apply for a preferred status with respect to the taxation of those individuals or organizations that wish to contribute to its finances. In this case the donor may apply for some form of relief from income taxes related to the amount that has been contributed to the organization. Under the somewhat outmoded term of "charitable donations", the Income Tax Act allows for such deductions in the case of gifts to "registered" organizations. Any organization, in order to achieve such favoured status, must apply to the Department of National Revenue, where the claim is examined, and the decision is made by civil servants. The grounds for such decisions are at present quite unclear, and the only appeal with respect to them is through the courts.

One type of voluntary organization, the political party, now enjoys enormously enhanced status in this respect. Not only is a considerably larger portion of the donation deductible, but it is deductible from "tax payable" rather than from total earnings.

However, it is precisely over the matter of what constitutes "political behaviour" that this system of preferment is encountering considerable difficulty. In recent years in Canada, voluntary participation in the development of public policy has increased substantially, and through many other organizations than political parties. In fact, groups of citizens have established "rights" to be heard in a large variety of public matters, from telephone rates to the construction of pipelines. Most such groups are single-interest groups with no intention of, or capacity for, becoming political parties and achieving the financial benefits of that status. However, many have claimed the right to registration as "charitable" organizations and the financial benefits that accrue to that status. Historically, charitable status has involved abstention from political activity, though the definition has remained somewhat vague.

For the freedom to learn, the matter is of the greatest importance. Voluntary organizations with public objectives, not only provide significant vehicles for the learning of their members and supporters, they also are sources of formulation of alternative goals for the entire society. The combination of donated "time" of their members, and the donated finances of their supporters allow for the careful and systematic development and advocacy of those goals, that is they allow other people to learn about those goals in a way that would otherwise be either impossible or unlikely. They present, in short, model behaviour with respect to what it means to have investigated and accepted those goals. One tradition in Canada, as in other countries with large and differentiated voluntary activities, has been that the State has frequently incorporated ideas and practices that were originally identified and demonstrated by voluntary organizations. Another is that the State frequently provides direct financial assistance to voluntary organizations that are providing services that contribute to the public good. Among other things, this practice allows more individuals to learn about the provision of such services, and to be responsible for them, than would be the case if the services were provided by employees of the State. Therefore, the means by which indirect financial assistance is provided, such as tax preference for donors, is of the greatest significance. That it should be subject to vague and apparently inconsistent regulation, and to interpretation by a small number of public servants, with no redress other than the expensive resort to the courts, must be of concern to anyone concerned about learning in Canadian society. A further concern, of course, would be the amount of support that tax regulations allow at any one time. While the precise relationship between tax relief and the amount of charitable giving is not clear, it is clear that many organizations are dependent upon such relief for their existence. Without the range of voluntary organizations that exists in Canada today, the negotiating of needs, including learning needs, would be impoverished and unrecognizable.

Labour Organizations

In 1977, the Canadian Government, in the company of all other governments of industrialized societies[9] faced the problem of encouraging the organized "labour movement" to take a larger role in the management of the economy. One means of doing this was to provide greatly increased opportunities for members and officers of labour organizations to learn the skills necessary for the effective management of those organizations, and for the management of increasing relationships between those organizations and other major organizations in the society.

The Government faced the alternative of providing additional resources to the formal educational agencies (C-Cl) so that they might provide in a systematic way the necessary opportunities. Some of these agencies in the past had provided such services, but only a few had done or were doing so, and relationships between the labour organizations and most post-secondary agencies were limited and even acrimonious. Or, the Government could provide resources directly to the labour organizations (B-Bl) with agreements that such funds would be spent on labour education, and that the labour organizations involved would not simply replace existing expenditures with the Government funds. Having chosen the latter, the Government entered into five-year contracts with four major labour federations, and in addition provided individual grants for organizations outside of the federations, bursaries and research grants for individuals wishing to engage in long-term study, and a programme of grants for post-secondary agencies. The latter programme was cancelled at the end of the first year because of economy measures. However, the first three programmes have been continued and have now completed the fifth year of the agreement. An evaluation of the first four years of the project[10] was completed in 1982.

In creating these programmes, the Federal Government utilized all of the major options open to a government wishing to bring about results only achievable by learning. Assistance was provided to non-educational corporate bodies (sub-rectangle B-Bl), to individuals (B-Bl) and to educational agencies, though the latter programme was relatively easily sacrificed when the demand for economy arose. In these cases, the non-educational organizations are permitted to purchase educational services, as they choose, as are the individuals involved. Some have done so, but for the most part the organizations have chosen to provide for their own educational needs, developing teacher programmes, training instructors, and providing the administrative structures within the organizations necessary to carry out the tasks. The result is the rapid development of the largest, new, relatively self-sustaining system of adult education to be created in Canada in the past decade. By the end of the first five-year period, expenditures by the Federal Government approached fifteen million, while the labour organizations will have expended between one and one half, and twice that amount from their own resources.

The advantages, such as the fact that the goals are clear and apparent to the organizations, and the claim of membership, make the recruitment of learners relatively simple, instruction can be carried out within a framework of teaching and learning that is familiar to all concerned, and in which effectiveness and relevance, at least at the level of "tool-courses", are relatively easily determined. At the same time, loyalty and learning are close companions, and the quality of membership will be inevitably strengthened where the member is able to learn among fellow members and in the hands of his or her own organization. Disadvantages are to be found because of the dependence of programmes on the availability of particular individuals, and with respect to the inescapable, but not always negative, political atmosphere in which the entire programme must take place. Advanced courses for senior leaders, and increasing dependence on the quality of the programme and the means of evaluation eventually create the need for the type of detachment, or protective distance, that is part of the structure of the formal education system. Already some leaders within the labour organizations are seeing the need for some degree of system and permanence that is generally associated with the formal agencies. Whether that can be achieved without losing the advantages, as being tried by the Australians with the creation of a semi-independent Labour College, remains to be seen.

There is however another advantage within the present arrangement of Canadian federalism. If the Federal Government wishes to choose the educational route (C-Cl) on any scale it must negotiate with the Provincial governments, who regard even the provision of public instruction to adults as an exclusive prerogative. In the past, such negotiations, involving a range of existing relationships with provinces have blunted or at least substantially altered Federal intentions. However, in the case of the provision of funds to corporate bodies to meet agreed-upon learning goals, there has been no such need, and apparently no objections from the provinces. Perhaps the scale is small enough to avoid Provincial concern, but the labour education programme now in existence suggests a model that the Federal Government will be tempted to undertake on other scales and for other purposes. While the provinces may hold jurisdiction over all public forms of instruction, the Federal Government cannot escape its responsibility for learning, and may decide to meet those needs without making educational choices.

Learning at a Distance

We argued earlier that when an individual translates a learning need into an educational need, he or she surrenders a certain freedom of choice in return for other benefits, the chief of which is certification. During the decades of the fifties and sixties, an enormous amount of experimentation was undertaken with respect to how much freedom an individual might enjoy and still remain a student in the formal sense of the word. The addition of television as an instructional medium added to the relatively limited resources that were available for "correspondence learning" or what is now called "learning at a distance". "Colleges Without Walls", "Tele-Universities" and other such formal agencies proliferated during that period. In varying situations students gained control over time, place and to a certain degree, subject-matter, while still being duly registered students of specific educational agencies. Various "floating" educational enterprises took advantage of the existence of substantial numbers of instructors related to fixed agencies by arranging special relationships between the floating agency, the part-time instructor and widely dispersed students. However, in all this variation, two factors remained relatively constant, the fees paid, and the final right of the educational agency to evaluate and certify the student.

In a country with the geography of Canada, there has always been some recognition of the existence of capable individuals who, for reasons of birth or employment, could not physically present themselves at one of the fixed educational resources. Conventional correspondence education, leading to formal achievement has always been a small but important aspect of the total education enterprise. However, with the educational boom of the fifties and sixties, and the vastly increased demand for formal certification, plus the apparent resources of television, the interest in "education-at-a-distance" led to the formation of a number of new agencies of which Athabasca University in the Province of Alberta is one example.

Athabasca University is designed primarily for students who may never set foot on a particular "campus" but who will, by means of various exposures in instruction of which television is only one, follow carefully designed courses and eventually graduate with proper certification.

The intention is presumably, to make it easier for individuals to translate learning needs into educational needs, and to have access to the resources that allow them to do so. The degree to which the same quality of educational experience can be successfully maintained over these distances remains a matter of debate. There is some irony in the fact that the faculty of Athabasca University, heretofore resident in the metropolitan centre of Edmonton and experiencing little distance themselves from conventional resources for learning, are now being required to move to the town of Athabasca, where they will suffer some distance as well as their students.

What sort of distance is truly involved? Is it merely geographical distance, so that the role of student can be effectively replicated even though the student remains physically at a distance from the source of instruction, or are there social and psychological, and eventually political distances involved as well? Education has always somewhat surreptitiously depended upon the learning that is associated with membership. A glance at the daily activities of any large educational organization will reveal how much time and effort and expense is devoted to encouraging students to come to feel like members. Where else do Alumni organizations come from? The major question facing such organizations as Athabasca is the degree to which it must find some replacement for the sense of membership provided for the conventional student, so that education and learning can remain hand in hand.

Conclusion

Our intention has been simply to provide a framework, a perspective, for understanding how learning does or can function in any society. Societies do not themselves learn but they are increasingly dependent upon the individual capacity to do so. Our basic contention is that to decide to help the piper learn the tune, results in changing the entire relationship between the piper and the payer, between the piper and the society around him, and between the piper and himself or herself. To understand the nature of those changes, and to recognize the difference between choices that maximize the inherent possibilities of such learning, and choices that are likely to damage or impede the piper's likelihood of learning to play the tune, and learning to want to play it to the best of his ability or to damage the piper's interest in learning anything else in the future, is the new intellectual challenge. It deserves our best efforts to understand it.

NOTES

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3. The Globe and Mail, Toronto, Canada, March 21, 1981, p. B1.

4. Botkin, Elmandjra, Malitza, No Limits to Learning, A Report to the Club of Rome, Pergamon Press, Toronto, 1979.

5. Tough, A., Adult's Learning Projects, 2nd Edition, OISE Press, Toronto 1980.

6. Johnstone and Riviera, Volunteers for Learning; Chicago, Alaine Publishing Co., 1965.

7. Waniewicz, The Demand for Part-Time Learning by Adults in Ontario; OISE Press, Toronto, 1975.

8. Thomas, A.M., Studentship and Membership: A Study of Roles in Learning; and Kidd and Selman; Coming of Age; Adult Education in Canada in the '60s; CAAE, Toronto, 1975.

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LEARNING: TOWARD A NEW PARADIGM

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LEARNING: TOWARD A NEW PARADIGM

a summary of discussions

During the seminar organized by the Sub-Commission on Education of the Canadian Commission for Unesco and held in Ottawa from May 25 to 27, 1983, Learning in Society, a discussion paper written by Professor Alan M. Thomas and distributed fairly extensively by the Canadian Commission in February 1983 (Occasional Paper 41), was the topic of several discussions with the author. Approximately twenty researchers and practitioners of continuing education, with widely varying backgrounds, participated in these discussions. A list of the participants appears on page 117.

Obviously it is impossible, in just a few short pages, to convey the full content and tone of the discussions which took place during this seminar. Moreover, it did not seem advisable, in this brief report, to try to reproduce all the twists and turns, digressions, and backtracking which went on for purposes of adding nuances, complementary information or explanations. It seemed more appropriate to present a personal summary, the coherence and focusses of which may not always reflect the dynamics of the seminar.

Although the discussions all dealt with learning perceived as a new paradigm (A), the issue was broached in many different ways. Among the specific aspects considered and analysed were: the interactions between learning - an essentially personal act - and the environment, and even the conditioning of learning by the socio-economic and political structure which - in a sense - surrounds it, makes it possible and at the same time has a profound effect on it (B); the interrelationships between the individual dimensions of learning and the institutional dimensions of education (C); and the new avenues which technological advances have opened up to those who wish to learn (D). The epistemological and purely political issue of the new approaches to knowledge came up in all these discussions, albeit in various forms. This matter is dealt with in the conclusion of this report (E).

(A) Toward a New Paradigm

For the past twenty years, as pointed out by Professor Gordon Selman (p. 7), theories, programmes and sometimes policies dealing with continuing education or with lifelong learning (and these are not the same thing) have noted that it is important, even essential, for each and every individual to learn, simply in order to be able to survive in modern-day societies, let alone fit in and act with some degree of effectiveness. Professor Alan M. Thomas' study is no exception to this trend. However, it gives a fresh perspective by reversing the relationships between education and learning, and between, on the one hand, the simple provision or dissemination of already established knowledge and, on the other, the development of new knowledge and its experimentation.

The advocates of continuing education - theoreticians and practitioners alike - long believed that readier, expanded access to educational resources was in itself both the promise and the mark of a democratization of knowledge and hence of society. The disillusionment suffered in this regard has often been cruel, the disenchantment hard to bear. The figures contained in a recent study on illiteracy in Canada, published by the Canadian Commission for Unesco[1], are brutally revealing in this respect. Hopes and disillusionment are based on and measured by the formal educational system. And perhaps this is where the impasse lies.

In the current scheme of things, actual practice constantly refutes and conflicts with the prevailing, well-intentioned theories by somewhat surreptitiously sacrificing the capacity or will to learn, the "instinct" to learn and its inherent freedom, the learning process and the joy in it, to the educational system and its host of institutions, specialists and teachers, whose attitudes and methods do not always change when they start calling themselves discussion leaders or facilitators. In the vast majority of cases, the paradigm of education or teaching remains, in the final analysis, the most fundamental referent of these theories, and even of practices aimed at stimulating the capacity or will to learn.

Thus, we are being presented here with a change in paradigm, and a clearly revolutionary one. I will come back to this later. According to Professor Alan M. Thomas and many of the other participants, this change implies nothing less than putting learning back in first place and henceforth judging the value and relevance of educational institutions, programmes, services and theories on the basis of whether or not they act as aids or obstacles to this fundamental and essential referent. In other words, we are being asked to get back to basics - undoubtedly the aim of the founders of this vast socio-cultural movement we call continuing education. However, we are also being encouraged to go further, to transcend the ambiguities and contradictions of the theories and practices, the new features of which sometimes mask the hidden links all too well.

This last comment is illustrated by the confusion or imprecision in the vocabulary used, in the translation problems which are sometimes encountered and which, in my view, are merely a reflection of deeper confusions and ambiguities. For example, in translating "learning" by "apprentissage", we place much more emphasis on the learner's dependence on his teacher than on his freedom and creative potential. The Larousse dictionary indicates that "apprentissage", the act of learning a trade, may be carried out in an institutional or industrial setting (on-the-job training) and is given legal sanction through the awarding of a certificate of professional qualification. Thus, despite the fact that this sort of learning takes place outside the school system, we still wind up with institutions and pieces of paper. And if we turn from here to English, the dictionary gives us "to apprentice" or "to article", adding ambiguity to confusion. However, to be fair, we should note that "apprentissage de la vie" can take many forms, and that Harrap's takes up back to learning by translating this expression as "to learn by experience".

Similarly, the expression "usagers" (of educational services or institutions), employed in the publication Du point de vue des adultes (ICEA-CAAE, October 1982), was translated by "learners" in the English version, From the Adult's Point of View, once again surreptitiously stripping learning of its inherent freedom and spontaneity by imposing education and the school system.

In contemporary theory, the "de-schooling" of education is sometimes considered an accomplished fact; however, in practice, this victory is far from being assured. The report of the study group on adult training (Jean Commission), entitled Apprendre: une action volontaire et responsable (Quebec City, 1982), devotes an entire chapter to the de-schooling of training methods and programmes, a chapter which clearly shows the permanent and dominant influence of schooling on learning. This influence, which can take many forms, nips the act of learning in the bud, stifling its enthusiasm, and places severe limitations on the ambitious project of lifelong learning, within the broad perspectives and aims of which all educational resources, not just scholastic institutions, must be used and co-ordinated in pursuance of individual and collective development.

Beyond this initial ill-assured victory, this initial unconsummated revolution, the urgency of a second liberation becomes apparent - the freeing of learning from the domination of education (institutions, programmes, models, etc.). Just as education goes beyond the school, so learning transcends the limits and limitations of education.

As I said earlier, what we are dealing with here is a radical change in paradigm, a turning from didactics (and education sciences) toward the study of learning - in other words, the adoption of learning, rather than teaching, as the focus of study and research. This implies that the significance, vigour and status of learning as a social reality have been (or will be) recognized. It is a matter of becoming interested in learning itself, not just in the fact of learning something. At first glance, the proposed change may seem highly academic; however, it is linked to educational, and at the same time epistemological and political, issues which I will seek to explain in the following paragraphs.

The proposed change in paradigm is both part of, and an extension of, a broad trend of thought and action. I will limit myself here to mentioning only a few characteristics or highlights of this trend.

In the 1969/1970 annual report of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (Québec), in a section on "the educational activity", Pierre Angers discussed the foundations and objectives of the educational system and, at the same time, provided the encouragement for an initial change in perspective. Rather than viewing and trying to understand education on the basis of the school system, and subsequently trying to promote its maximum effectiveness, Pierre Angers suggested looking at the issue from the angle of personal development, seen as the objective of the educational system and the educational activity. In the proposed solutions and in the reforms accomplished thus far, he sees a philosophy focussed primarily on the integration of the individual and his place within the system: accessibility, participation, democratization. Angers suggested turning this relationship around so that it would be the educational system which conformed, in both organization and operation, to basic human needs, rather than vice versa (p. ix). In suggesting that henceforth priority be given to the educational activity (p. 72), he was led to focus attention, within the school or the educational system, on the activity of the student as the only essential element, an element which the other participants in the system could only encourage and support. Since that time, as witnessed by his closing remarks at the 1983 international colloquium on continuing education at the University of Montreal (Faculty of Continuing Education), Pierre Angers has focussed his attention to an increasing extent on the act of learning, its dynamics, its conditioning, its functioning, its momentum, etc. while still recognizing the importance of the educational environment.

The latest computer science research into artificial intelligence has also paid particular attention to the learning process or to "what happens when one learns", and to the chemical and biological aspects, as well as symbolic and socio-cultural aspects, of this process. Mention should be made here of the Global Learning Symposium project, currently in progress under the guiding hand of Professor Thomas at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The aim of this symposium is to create a forum for interdisciplinary meetings and discussions on learning - essentially a transdisciplinary reality which transcends the limited fields and perspectives of education sciences and psychology.

(B) The Individual and the Group

By focussing attention on the somewhat spontaneous occurrence and inherent freedom of learning, in its own right, the essentially personal nature of learning is brought to light. The importance of the socio-cultural environment should not be downplayed, however. The background of an individual, in terms of biology or genetics or in terms of belonging to a specific cultural universe, gives that person his or her vital network of contacts in time and space, in spirit and flesh. Similarly, the act of learning is, of necessity, simultaneously situated, nurtured and conditioned by the society in which the individual lives. These social, cultural, and even political aspects of learning were discussed at length during the seminar (see papers by D'Arcy Martin and Brock Whale p. 95 and p. 59).

It is significant therefore that the title of the Quebec policy statement on adult education, proposed by the Jean Commission, is entitled Apprendre: une action volontaire et responsable (Learning: a deliberate and responsible action). Its title indicating the basic premise, this report suggests certain economic, social, cultural and political measures needed to liberate and support the personal, deliberate, and responsible aspects of learning.

We should perhaps clear up certain confusions here. One of these - that society and the groups that make it up have a capacity for learning - unfortunately pervades the report to the Club of Rome, No Limits to Learning[2] (Oxford/Toronto, 1979). Learning is an essentially personal process rooted in the creative freedom of an individual. However, some of the accepted expressions have a hidden meaning, which would be impossible to avoid here, and evoke collective knowledge, the wisdom of a civilization. They are linked to the concept of cultural wealth or collective heritage - the social, political and even economic dimensions of which have often been discussed. It is within this social setting and in conjunction with this cultural heritage that the essentially personal process of learning takes place.

In adult education, the steps taken by various groups or voluntary associations have demonstrated not only the usefulness or effectiveness of these groups in terms of the learning achieved by their members or participants, but also the importance of the strictly cognitive aspects both of belonging and of collective action.

Another confusion which must be set straight is the identification, in practice, of society with the State. Belonging to society takes many forms, through the chosen or imposed groups involved in everyday life: the family, colleagues, friends, professional or recreational associations, and so on. The democratic State can fulfill its role and mission of facilitating the exercise of individual freedoms only through the recognition and mediation of groups, organizations or intermediary bodies, for which it makes the rules or establishes modes of interaction. The same applies in the area of learning to the relationships between individuals and society, and to those who, together, articulate individual and collective rights. Concretely, recognition of the former is accomplished through recognition of the latter. What would be the value of the right to speak a language incomprehensible to others? And what is an individual's right to work worth in a society where unemployment prevails? The recognition of individual rights is, therefore, meaningless unless society makes it structurally possible for those rights to be exercised and, in so doing, gives them a collective dimension. This is the role both of legislation and regulations on language or labour, for example, and of collective agreements or other arrangements between organizations - that is, between groups of individuals who have banded together in order to have the power to ensure respect for their rights. Insofar as learning is concerned, we will recognize and describe the importance of the environment, and even the social conditioning of the learning process.

As with any human act, learning is, on the one hand, the act of an individual functioning in solidarity with others in time and space and existing as a person through and within this solidarity. On the other hand, learning is only possible, to any significant degree, in interaction with others, and language, the instrument of knowledge, serves as both the medium and the message for this interaction. In short, personal development is possible only through and within interpersonal relationships, through and within the solidarities of one's membership in society, and learning, an eminently personal act, can only be achieved through and within these various relationships, solidarities and associations. The accounts received tend to agree on this point: many adults say that they have learned more through their actions and through the solidarities which have both prompted such actions and been made stronger by them than they ever did at school... even night school. Moreover, several studies conducted in educational institutions have shown that adult students recognize the importance of groups in the stimulation and support of learning activities.

(C) New Institutional Roles

The change in perspective described earlier and the accounts mentioned above give rise to a different perspective of the learning environment or framework - specifically, the educational environment and all levels of educational institutions. Various papers, such as those of Guy Bourgeault (p. 73), Bert Curtis (p. 49) and Teresa MacNeil (p. 87), stressed that in a project or perspective involving continuing education or, even more so, lifelong learning, the schools and the other socio-educational and socio-cultural partners must complement one another.

Other sections of this report deal at length with the aims, procedures, and mechanisms of this complementarity, as well as the conditions for its implementation and effectiveness. In order for learning to take place, this complementarity must exist between the various partners involved in education: this means not just the schools, but also voluntary groups, cultural and recreational groups, unions, businesses, the media, and so on. Not wishing to belabour the point, I will limit myself here to reviewing some of the questions asked and some of the issues broached during the seminar.

1. The first issue raised was the ambiguity of de-schooling or of certain efforts to free training and learning from the tyranny of education. Although it is important to acknowledge its relativity, i.e. to situate the role of the school in relation to training and learning and in relation to the roles of the other socio-educational partners, it seems equally important to recognize the specific, if limited, role of the school itself. The qualitative and quantitative wealth of human and financial resources invested in the school (read: the educational system and all levels of educational institutions) makes it the prime repository of educational resources for those who wish to learn.

Moreover, the school, in itself, has an explicit, specific and formal mission in this regard.

2. Semantics cannot be used to avoid the real issues or shirk the challenges, along with the pitfalls and problems, of the necessary co-operation between the various levels of government in Canada, and between educational institutions and other sources and resources in the area of training and learning. In recent years, there have been many attempts, in what at times seemed like petty political squabbles, to use the distinctions between education, training and learning - legitimate and useful distinctions in other regards - to lay claim to increased powers, to justify poorly expressed and untimely statements with those made by other levels, and to defend monopolies. Ottawa, for example, has tried to separate (vocational) training from education in order to affirm its jurisdiction over the former and leave the exclusive and jealously defended constitutional jurisdiction over the latter to the provinces, particularly Quebec. For its part, Quebec has often shown a disinterest in useful inter-regional co-operation and, above all, essential Canada-wide co-operation in the area of training and education. Similarly, desirable exchanges between schools and industry, or more generally between education and labour - designed to promote better and more relevant learning, training and education - have often been sacrificed for the sake of a compartmentalization between schools and education, on the one hand, and industry and training, on the other, with the pure pleasure of learning being ignored or left to recreational and voluntary groups. However, there are certain vital links between education, training and learning which cannot be destroyed without, in the final analysis, doing ill office to learning and the individuals involved. Hence the importance, here as in other areas, of defining and expressing concepts accurately. Although this does not always mean they will be accurately applied, it at least helps in the critical analysis of the application.

3. It is important that modes of co-operation be established between the schools and the other partners (businesses, unions, groups, associations and various agencies) which will allow them to develop educational resources whose contributions are, or at least can be, complementary. As has been pointed out, the co-operative approach must be promoted; it can and must respect both the autonomy of the partners and the specific nature both of their aims and of their contributions. Business cannot be expected to develop basic training programmes for their employees, nor can schools be expected to get directly involved in the efforts of members of the public to improve housing conditions and urban development. However, business can be asked to encourage basic training through various means, most notably the granting of educational leave, or occasionally to make its facilities available for training activities. Moreover, colleges and universities can be asked to provide members of the public with the support they need in the area of research and training in order to carry out such actions, and to make competent resource people available to voluntary educational organizations, such as those working in the area of literacy.

4. The relationships developed with other socio-educational partners should enable the schools to recognize the value of training provided outside the school environment - through reception structures and in the actual programmes, through exemption from certain courses or the recognition of equivalent training, and through appropriate teaching techniques. However, we must guard against the neo-colonialist attitude which may fuel certain desires or attempts to "accredit" learning at any cost. Here again, it will

prove advisable, while avoiding standardizing or endorsing everything, to respect not only the freedom of individuals, but also the autonomy of the institutions or agencies involved and the specific nature of their respective contributions.

5. The co-operation sought, with the joint efforts and consultation it should imply, will mean radical changes for institutions and instructors alike. Thus, while keeping alive the utopian ideal of new institutions and specialists focussed on the interests of learners rather than on their own (often petty) concerns, it will be undoubtedly be advisable to introduce new practices which, by surreptitiously or audaciously opening up new avenues for the institutions, will save them from ossification. Several papers submitted during the discussion mentioned such new experiences or practices.

(D) Technological Change or Illusion?

Used in conjunction with other means, the technological possibilities of teleprocessing may help to free the act of learning and perhaps to turn the attention of institutions outward rather than inward, if, in turn, they do not become new institutions. Although the paper by Michel Pichette (p. 107) provided some stimulating food for thought and discussion in this regard, there was not enough time during the seminar for any systematic exploration of this charted but largely untravelled ground.

There is much talk these days of assisted or machine instruction, available in every village or even every home; this is called distance learning. But at a distance from what? and from whom? From the school, obviously, but not from the home; from the teacher, perhaps, but not from the person doing the learning. Suddenly it becomes crystal clear that, from the point of view of the person doing the learning, school instruction is learning "at a distance". We begin to see how technological aids could free learning from various obstacles and constraints and how they could - or can already or will be able to - help institutions and their staff accomplish the outward-turning process described above as a prerequisite for the recognition of the supremacy of learning.

Professor Thomas pointed out that just a few short decades ago, the progress of students of various ages, often grouped in the same class, was measured by their graduation from book 1 to book 2 to book 3, and so on - in reading, mathematics, even history and geography. The grade system took the place of these books in larger primary and secondary schools, where it was possible to divide students into classes - that is, into more homogeneous (age) groups. New technologies may help free the act of learning from the constraints - standard texts, imposed time frames and so on - of both the textbook and group/class methods. They may also make literacy and basic training programmes more accessible, thus permitting the acquisition of the skills and knowledge that have become essential in today's societies, especially the more industrialized ones, and opening up a wide spectrum of learning possibilities, for which these basic skills and knowledge pave the way.

This new technology could also create new powers of cultural and ideological domination. Thus, there is an urgent need for democratic discussion on teleprocessing and its uses. The vast problem of the relevance of data processing and the related sciences, as well as a major democratic issue, is involved here. This problem and this issue can be succinctly explained in the form of a question: who decides (or will decide) on the design of the programmes, software and instruments used? The question, an epistemological one, is also an ethical and political one. We must, for example, ensure broad access to teleprocessing and data bases if we wish the opportunities opened up by this new technology to serve the entire community -individuals and groups - rather than just a privileged few. It is *perhaps even more important that democratic control* be ensured over the information stored in these data bases. Finally, we must be able, individually and collectively, to use teleprocessing tools. Otherwise, once again, the learning process will be impaired, rather than stimulated and supported.

We should also point out that it is the less skilled workers who, in practice, risk being denied access to introductory computer science and training programmes (and to teleprocessing tools). This would result in an increase, rather than a decrease, in the inequality of learning opportunities, often denounced in educational circles.

(E) Toward New Approaches to Knowledge

As the preceding paragraphs have amply illustrated, the new paradigm has vast educational, socio-political and epistemological consequences. In my opinion, the history of adult education over the past twenty or thirty years, in Canada at least, has been both the reflection and the cause of developments in cultural and educational fields. The advent of adult education, with its emphasis on taking into account the experience and related knowledge of adults, had a profound effect on teaching methods. There was an attempt, in the schools, to focus on the learner rather than the instructor. The advocates of continuing education then suggested co-operation between the school, whose monopoly was thus refuted, and the other educational resources in the community, for the sake of the learner and the learning process. More recently, there has been a great deal of emphasis on the learning process and, as a result, awareness of the epistemological and political consequences of the change in perspective has been heightened and expanded considerably.

Thus in addition to the new more egalitarian or more interdependent relationships between the learners (rather than the taught) and the teachers (remaining learners), and in addition to the new relationships sought, but not yet established, between those doing the learning and the institutions that can help them to do so, and between the institutions themselves, we are dealing with new approaches to knowledge and, consequently, new social relationships and a new social order.

Seminar participants felt that recognition should be given to the fact that those doing the learning are not only acquiring a store of existing knowledge, they are also creating knowledge - to the extent that they are adding to this store. Learning, cut loose from the constraints of the teacher-pupil relationship, is also being freed from existing knowledge which - in the final analysis - is knowledge established by the instructors. Thus, new approaches to knowledge are being established between "laypeople" on the one hand and specialists, scholars or professionals of every ilk on the other, as a result of interdependence and co-operation which - in turn - are both the reflection and the beginnings of new power relationships in a new social order.

Utopia? Definitely. A dream or the shape of things to come? To a certain extent, it is up to us - professors, administrators and political authorities - to decide this. For, when all is said and done, it is society's choice. In a 1979 report to the Club of Rome entitled No Limits to Learning: Bridging the Human Gap,[2] James W. Botkin, Mahdi Elmandjra and Mircea Malitza aptly showed both the immensity and the urgency of the challenge facing the entire planet as a result of the ever-widening gap between the growing complexity of problems and the human capacity to find appropriate solutions.

A certain style, or "quality", of scientific research, and the subsequent use of its findings, appear to have outlived their usefulness when it comes to finding adequate solutions to the complex problems often created by the very techniques developed to apply such research. The many interactions between the various factors or aspects of a phenomenon or situation, combined with the interdependence of individuals and groups, create new facts and situations which require, for the sake of the autonomy and integration of individuals and groups, what the authors of the report call innovative learning - as opposed to maintenance learning. Innovative learning is a scientific practice which has as its primary features anticipation and participation, or solidarity in time and space.[3] As we said earlier, this solidarity acts as the sort of vital nutrient for the learning process and provides the framework for its essential and inalienable freedom.

NOTES

1. Thomas, Audrey M., Adult Illiteracy in Canada - A Challenge, Occasional Paper 42, 1983, 144 p., Canadian Commission for Unesco.

2. Botkin, James W., Mahdi Elmandjra, Mircea Malitza, No Limits to Learning: Bridging the Human Gap, A Report to the Club of Rome, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1979, p. 6 and 22.

3. Ibid, p. 17 - 44. See also the perspectives - which may provide food for thought on similar topics - employed in certain papers submitted at the seminar of Unesco's International Institute for Educational Planning (October 1978): Le futur de l'éducation et l'éducation du futur, published under R. M. Avakov, Paris, 1980.

II. EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES

- Roles of institutions and management of learning
- In school ... and elsewhere - experiences
- The new technologies ... - perspectives

THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF LEARNING

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THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF LEARNING

Any "Canadian" look at public educational systems and the application of the concept of lifelong learning to public policy and practice seems at once to recognize that the "Canadian" look will be virtually unique in the western world. The assignment of education as a provincial right and responsibility under the BNA Act is the root cause of this uniqueness. No matter how one may feel about this historical fact, its influence on the present and future of public education in Canada is profound. Public educational systems are just now slowly coming to realize the implications of the concept of lifelong learning in spite of half a century of encouragement and proselytizing by adult education leaders throughout the world, not the least of whom have been Canadians. Helen Lyman Smith's statement in 1954 put the matter in succinct terms which are still not widely accepted in Canada.

> When H.G. Wells made the startling statement that the world must choose between education and catastrophe, the general assumption was that he was talking of the education of children. But children are not running the world of affairs, either locally or nationally. It is not the education of children that will save the world from destruction; it is the education of adults. It is the adult who must be released from his prejudice, his narrow customs. His nature, outlook and habits must be broadened and ennobled until they attain to a civilized citizenship. This, and this alone, is the concern of the state in education.[1]

Dr. Thomas' paper provides an admirable introduction to the theme even though it contains certain assumptions about which one might like to raise questions. It seems to me that however quickly public policy and practice in the field of education may change (and long-established educational institutions are notoriously slow to change) the impact of public policy is more likely to change clientele, practice and methodology in the institutions than to change their basic function in society.

A present confluence of four major societal factors makes speculation about the future role of formal education both popular and risky.

Tomorrow's Educational Institution

These four factors are: first, an increased awareness on the part of individuals, employers and the State, that "learning" in some form or other is the only viable response to change. Second, the present rate of unemployment created by depression in the economy, coupled with present and projected structural unemployment, drives many individuals to learn new or different skills. Third, the changed demographics of Canada create interesting problems for both formal educational institutions and the state. The fourth factor is the impact of the increase in available information through an improved technology of communications.

Those responsible for the provision of public education at all levels are already being forced to respond to the phenomenal rate of increase in information in the society. Schools, colleges and universities are becoming aware that their students are gaining more information from outside school than inside it and are beginning to respond to this relatively new phenomenon. They have not yet, to any marked degree, recognized through their actions the fact that if we are to have a society devoted to lifelong learning, elementary and secondary schools must encourage the concept of lifelong learning far more than they have done in the past. The switch from preparation for life to preparation for a life of learning is a very substantial one and will take some time to accomplish even after the decisions have been made that it is worth accomplishing. The potential advantage to schools in being freed from the attempt to cram a lifetime of learning into twelve years has not yet been taken seriously.

With respect to demographics, both elementary and secondary schools have coped with the post-war enrolment surge by adding buildings and teachers. Now that the influx is past, teachers' unions and, in some cases, governments encourage these schools to "get on with" the teaching of adults, however unsuited by training and experience staff may be to accomplish this task.

While the demographic fact of the decline in numbers of elementary and secondary school students is obvious to all, the response in public policy seems to be particularly ill conceived. Secondary schools, in particular, across the country are suddenly becoming aware of their potential as adult institutions, primarily as a mechanism for maintaining jobs for teachers whose training and experience is with the teaching of children. Very little provision is being made through public policy or action to encourage those teachers to be fully retrained so they might be more effective teachers of adults. In many cases to date, this lack of policy and practice has led to ineffective work with many adults which has, in turn, worked against effectiveness in the provision of lifelong learning opportunities.

The "demographic problem" has been used, in some instances, in public policy to minimize growth funding for post-secondary institutions on the theory that where the numbers of those of compulsory school age are declining, this decline will automatically result in a decline of the enrolment in post-secondary institutions. For various reasons, quite the reverse has been happening over the last three or four years. The idea that publicly-established adult institutions have an infinite market limited only by the quality, imagination and price of the programmes they offer has not caught the attention of policy-makers.

At the elementary and secondary levels, it must be remembered that schools are significantly inhibited in the full acceptance of the idea of lifelong learning because of the numerous constraints that are placed upon them by established social and political value systems. These systems directly or indirectly provide finances and insist that in all societies, the young are restricted from learning certain kinds of things. These inherent restrictions were ably put by John R. Seeley in his paper produced for the Toronto Board of Education in 1962, in which he said in part:

> The facts that are suppressed are, by and large, now even more than then, the key "facts of life": the facts about the nature of human nature, the facts about the nature of society generally and the state of ours in particular; the facts about

power, wealth, the state of ethics and philosophy in our age, the facts about themselves, even the facts about the school and the educational enterprise. (Of course, it is only the key facts of life that are suppressed. And it is a fact that every society suppresses these. But who tells the children that?)

No, the reason they are not taught has inferentially already been given: they are not taught because they do matter; they are not taught because there is a vested interest in ignorance about them; they are not taught because, like most truths worth hearing, they are uncomfortable; they are not taught because they ruffle false composures; they are not taught because in favouring freedom and a better life they threaten order and safe and easy hegemony for those who already have the most of whatever there is to get.

Does anyone think they are taught? How and where does the child learn the brute facts about Power? How it is seized, and maintained? How it is served by institutions ostensibly designed to stand against it? How does the child learn the brute facts about money? How it is made - not of course, in the niggling amounts that represent pay or salary for work done, but in the really large chunks that come out of pipelines (for "owners", speculators and Ministers of the Crown), or large electrical combines, or cartels or trusts or oligopolies? How and when does he learn how business, big business, is actually done as over against some image based on a seventeenth-century Hanseatic merchant, and the rewards of care, thrift, prudence, hard work, foresight and all that? When do they learn how prices are set (as against the myth of the market); how "marketing" (successful marketing) is really done; how business and government interpenetrate; what kinds of conduct (not found in copybooks) do and do not have what kinds of "payoff"; how business decisions actually get made?

Where and when do they learn the actual nature of their own natures and what is now known about these?

How do they learn, and from whom, about social class - without which knowledge a great deal else that they learn is misleading or unintelligible? About the function of myth in society generally and about the leading myths of their own?

> Who tells them so vital a fact as this: that there is hardly a course of action or a form of behaviour recommended in one culture that is not regarded as horrendous in another?[2]

In a similar kind of way, but for different reasons, colleges and universities are now under funding mechanisms which are the result of public policy which, at times, is narrowly conceived and does not acknowledge the concept of lifelong learning but is rather directed to short-term economic and political goals.

The universities have traditionally been able (as private institutions) to avoid most of these imposed constraints on the freedom to learn. However, now that their funding is primarily public, they, too, are under great pressure to direct their major efforts toward political policy goals. These are frequently short-term and narrowly specialized. The resolution of this inherent conflict is not simple, but is of prime importance to any society which has a developed concern about lifelong learning.

The public must be aware of some aspects of policies which exist at present if we wish to maintain a pluralistic and democratic society. The present emphasis nation-wide on funding mechanisms which encourage narrow job skill specialization at the expense of any sort of general education may be dangerous in several ways. In the first place, intensive highly specialized skill training for one, two, or three years or more has the strong tendency to produce graduates whose job skills for a particular limited occupation are excellent but whose mobility in the work force is restricted. In addition, the ability of these graduates to understand and operate effectively in the larger society is unfortunately and unnecessarily stunted. A continuation of this process can do no other than lead toward a society of narrowly skilled people susceptible to tyrannical leadership from the right or the left. In the second place, the present system is increasingly neglectful of those adults in the society who have either had difficulties in learning or poor opportunities to learn or are in some other way held back from attaining their potential. The continuation of this over time will obviously increase the differentiation between the haves and the have-nots of the society. The resultant long-term economic and social costs of this present policy stagger the imagination.

If this disastrous policy and practice is to change, those responsible for it will have to cooperatively design and finance systems and schemes which will help those adults who have been cast out of the learning stream to reassess their capabilities and re-enter the learning stream, either private or public, at an appropriate time and place. Only thus can they be encouraged to improve their skills, self-knowledge and perception of self-worth and so reduce their present functional illiteracy and social redundancy.

Cooperation versus Competition

One more present day observation is that political, social and environmental leaders on all fronts are quite outspoken about the need for cooperation in the achievement of local, provincial, national and international goals. A great deal of rhetoric is expended advocating the virtues of labour/management cooperation in the business and industrial community, federal/provincial cooperation in the political sphere, national cooperation to meet international competition and international cooperation to assist underdeveloped countries. At the local level in many organizations board/staff cooperation is often a talking point as well. What is seldom said is that almost the entirety of public education, with the possible exception of nursery schools and kindergartens, is devoted both in policy and practice to teaching the skills of competition. The skills of cooperation are sometimes talked about but are almost never taught. In fact, in most instances where students are invited to undertake serious business (assignments, tests, examinations), cooperative efforts are frowned upon or punished.

The neglect of providing by precept and example the opportunities for young and old alike to learn the skills of cooperation tends to defeat effective actions which could result if the contesting parties had the skills to cooperate for a greater mutual success.

Educational leave, for instance, while seriously discussed, appears more often than not to be seen as an adversarial issue rather than one where planned cooperation could be of potential mutual benefit to both employers and employees.

The application of the concept of lifelong learning could and should move public educational systems, particularly colleges and universities, to a much more open system of entry and exit, much more acknowledgement of the value of part-time study and much more public support, through various mechanisms, for part-time students of all types. The observation is often made that public educational institutions are aloof from the major society. However, this is a rapidly changing perception, particularly about the Canadian community colleges. The network of interaction between colleges and their communities is a phenomenon which, to date, has had little serious study and the scope of which is not well understood throughout the society. Some colleges have a ratio of one community-based advisory committee member to every five full-time students enrolled. In addition, a college may be assisting, at any given time, several hundred small and sometimes large businesses in its area with the preparation and supervision of short-term programmes of in-plant training. Present public policy, while it supports these activities in some measure, does not seem to be conceived in full recognition of their lifelong learning implications. In particular, present policy and present financing fail to capitalize upon the excellent opportunities these networks provide for legitimate part-time learning activities.

Leisure Time as Learning Time

However one perceives the future, there seems to be some unanimity of view that our concepts of leisure time will change. It seems agreed that there will be an increase in the amount of leisure time available to the populace, either voluntarily or compulsorily (e.g., through unemployment). It may be that leisure itself will become redefined, but until that happens, more and more individuals will need help or assistance in learning ways and means to make effective use of leisure time, effective for the individual concerned and for the society as well. Obviously, individuals learn about leisure from any number of sources - but in our society, educational systems provide a fundamental perception of leisure (as non-learning time) which, in many instances, persists and is reinforced with great skill by advertising agencies and the like for their own purposes. Educational systems have neglected leisure time as a learning time with the exception of games and sporting activities. If we are to move toward a learning society and, at the same time, enjoy more leisure, then educational institutions could make a valuable social contribution in assisting learners to "learn about leisure" in more individually productive ways.

Impact of New Technology on Learning

At all levels of public education, the electronic revolution is having and will continue to have a significant impact. A plethora of data is now available on almost any subject. The use of computers, videotext, audio-visual materials and so on, both in and out of classes, is changing the role of teachers. Teaching, in our time, has been a relatively private affair between teacher and class or between teacher and individual learner. With the advent of electronic teaching aids, teaching becomes a much more public activity. Accountability for the act of teaching will increase. Since teaching is always a moral act, this increase in accountability, as displayed through what the learners do with what they have learned, will become recognized as a much more serious consideration than it has been in the past.

A second ramification of the so-called "information explosion" is that the enormously improved individual access to information does not come with quality codes attached or built in. It likewise comes with an infinite variety of value systems or perceptions of value. Since public schools had their origins in the perceived need for a learned morality, so that a society would have at least enough commonality of morality and ethics to prevent chaos, it may well be that the public institutions will have to revert to their original role in some sense so that enough cohesiveness will remain in the society that the democratic process can be sustained.

Similarly, in the world of electronic trivia, each citizen is hard pressed to cull out fact from fiction, relevant data from irrelevant, worthy from unworthy.

It may well be that a fundamental policy decision which will have to be taken is that publicly-supported educational institutions will have to concentrate their attention on the development of critical thinking skills in their clients. They will have to concentrate, as well, on the education of their clients for life as citizens so that much more attention will have to be paid to the historical development and precious nature of the democratic process; the responsibilities that must accompany rights and freedoms; and the tenuous nature of individual freedom.

Above all, the enormous advance in electronics related to the teaching-learning process needs to be viewed by educational systems as a challenging opportunity to maintain both the right and the responsibility to care about the learner. While it is true that advantageous teaching use may be made in many cases through the infinite patience of the computer - it is at the same time true, that however sophisticated, the machine does not care if the learner learns or not. Learners, being human, need emotional support whatever their age. Good teachers, whether parents, shop foremen, managers, secretaries, etc., have consistently demonstrated that they care about their learners - as individuals. Only by being cared about does anyone learn to care about others. A whole society of persons who do not care about anyone other than themselves is not only ungovernable but unproductive as well. Perhaps the new technologies can be used in such ways that teachers, within or outside schools, colleges and universities will be able to devote more time and effort to the caring aspects of teaching and learning, and thereby contribute to a more civil and civilized society.

Maintaining Open Learning Choices

The difference between former perceptions of what public education was all about and present perceptions in terms of lifelong learning is that we have, for generations, tried to keep freedom of choice for our students open only part way through the years in school. By and large, we have kept the career and educational choices open through elementary school and, in recent times, into the early years of high school and have only started to narrow the choices in the later years of high school. Post-secondary education has, in most cases, continued the choice closures of high school. But the concept of lifelong learning is, above all, the business of persuading all citizens that learning choices are open throughout life. That, surely, is what lifelong learning is all about. The public educational institutions need to encourage clients to maintain open learning choices wherever possible. Hugh Segal says:

> The challenge.... for the college and university system is not, I beg you, to narrow the gates to personal achievement for our young people in response to today's prognostication "bias". It is, as surely as we sit here, absolutely vital that we enhance rather than diminish freedom of choice for young people who are seeking to make their own way.
>
> Outside the Iron Curtain and China, education must not be a precise public policy instrument to be used at will by industry or government to diminish choice and force young people down predetermined roads. We will have periods of shortage and glut - we will have unemployed linguistic instructors and engineering jobs going begging. I remember when nurses were flocking to California and law graduates could find work. There are rolls and slides in a free society - and dictatorship and workcamps in societies that are not.
>
> The college system should not allow itself to be shaped by this month's assessments of industry's needs. You should be shaped by a commitment to standards and excellence in all that you teach and a genuine concern for the process of arming all your students to make their own choices.[3]

NOTES

1. Smith, Helen Lyman. Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries, Chicago, American Library Association, 1954.

2. Seeley, John R. "The Facts of Life: A Plea for their Place in School", The Toronto Education Quarterly, reprinted from the issue of Autumn, 1962 (Toronto Board of Education, p. 5-6).

3. Segal, Hugh. "Education and Economic Recovery: The Challenge Ahead", address presented at the Annual Conference of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, Toronto, 1983.

LEADERSHIP IN MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING

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LEADERSHIP IN MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING

Alan Thomas, in the paper "Learning in Society", has issued a challenge to all who have concern for adult education to find ways to manage learning so that there can be an increased proportion of learners among all age categories of the population. The objective is to have greater numbers of people reaping the benefits of learning for their own sake as well as that of society. Key questions are raised in the paper regarding the need to broaden the base of knowledge sources so that learners are not restricted to the resources of educational institutions, and the need for greater interdependence between learner and State in making decisions about needs, learning, and location of learning resources.

Before addressing leadership requirements in relation to these questions there is a prior question about use of the term "management" in connection with learning. Thomas has used the axiom "He who pays the piper calls the tune" to describe the relationship between State and learner in the management of learning. He has assigned the role of payer to the State and of piper to the learner. The piper builds a case for the payer to consider more carefully what tunes the piper can play and to alter the relationship between payer and piper accordingly. Thomas' assignment of roles within the axiom breaks down as he describes that the State does not generally make payments directly to the learner, but to an intermediary: an institution, agency or organization through which resources for learning are disseminated. With that description in place it would seem more appropriate to assign the role of piper to the body that has the knowledge to disseminate, the one that is paid. That would leave the learner as the responder to the tune the payer has called upon the piper to play. Since learning is a voluntary act, the learner is free either to respond actively to the tune of the piper, in dance or in song, to attend as an audience to the spectacle, or to switch off the music altogether. It is the freedom of the learner to choose what to learn or to choose not to learn, that throws into question whether it is probable, or desirable, that learning can be managed by the State, especially through an intermediary. The act of management includes dimensions of direction, control and accountability. As long as the definition of learning as a freedom and a right is accepted the attempts to manage learning by the State are attempts to control and direct a freedom, albeit in the best interest of the individual and of society.

While the discussion in the Thomas paper stresses the need for the State to work more closely with the population to find new ways to bring people who need knowledge into active association with sources of knowledge, the focus seems to be on managing the sources of knowledge and terms of access to them. If this is so, it is an indirect approach to management of learning and, to keep the axiom in mind, even if the relationship is realized, the learner will still be the dancer to somebody else's tune. The learner may have been taught new tunes and dance steps as suggested in the paper. The probability of popular commitment to learning is therefore greatly increased, but learning is not being "managed" in a way that the control and accountability implied by use of the term can be exercised.

The idea of managing learning in the interests of both the individual and society is an attractive one, providing an approach can be found that will take into consideration where responsibility for direction and control lies and who can be held accountable. Starting from the definition that learning is a voluntary act, it would follow that the learner must be responsible for direction and control of, and be accountable for, at least a portion of the process. An examination of the process by which knowledge is transferred helps to identify where learner control lies.

The following diagram is an over-simplified picture of what happens when knowledge in the head of somebody who has it is transferred to the head of somebody who needs it. Knowledge is given form (information) by the body that has it, a person or an institution or agency. The information is communicated via an education process. The learner links his or her learning process with the agency's education process. Part of the learning process involves translation of the information to the learner's context to evolve a state of knowing and a decision about the ultimate use of the knowledge. If transfer of knowledge were simply a case of pouring knowledge from the head of the source of knowledge (Z1 in the diagram) into the head of the learner (Z2), then Y1 and Y2 would be identical, X1 and X2 would be identical as would Z1 and Z2.

Z1	Y1	X1	X2	Y2	Z2
Source of Knowledge	Information	Education Process	Learning Process	Translation	Learner Knowledge

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PROCESS

It would then be reasonable to undertake to "manage" the whole process from the Z1, Y1, X1 end. Transfer is not that simple. The task, therefore, is to achieve the best possible fit between Y1 and Y2, X1 and X2 in order to have Z2 come close to matching Z1. Information (Y1) needs to be in terms of, and in a form that is compatible with the learners' experience and current objectives in order for the knowledge to be effectively translated (Y2) to their situations. The education process (X1) needs to be compatible with what the learners have adopted as their best process (X2) for acquiring knowledge.

Since by definition learning is a voluntary act, the learning process, the translation into learner knowledge and decisions about its ultimate use are under the control of the learner. Information and the education process are under the control of the body that has the knowledge. From this picture of who controls what in the knowledge transfer process, it becomes obvious that if learning is to be "managed" it must be a joint venture involving those who have and those who need knowledge. The role of the State in the management process would continue to be determined by the level of control it can exercise over the sources of knowledge. It would also have a role in individual and societal needs identification and objectives setting.

The proposal made in this paper is that to achieve a learning society leadership effort should be focused on a sharing of management responsibilities. The sharing process will be referred to in this discussion as joint venture management of learning. It requires the parties involved in the transfer of knowledge to share in decision-making about the general direction of learning and to accept responsibility for decision-making for that portion of the knowledge transfer process over which they have control and for which they can be held accountable.

Relating to the clusters of critical decisions identified by the diagram in the Thomas paper, all of the clusters lie in the Z1 and Z2 zones indicated in the diagram of the knowledge transfer process in this paper. Critical decisions about social and individual needs and how they relate, about which needs require a commitment to learning, and about which learning needs require access to the formal education systems, precede a commitment on the part of the knowledge source and of the learner to negotiate a transfer. The knowledge transfer process diagram of this paper identifies additional clusters of critical decisions, the Y1, Y2 and X1, X2 zones, where the terms of transfer which are critical to finalizing the transaction are negotiated. The process also clarifies where control and therefore management responsibilities lie at each stage of the transaction.

As pointed out in the Thomas paper the State and the learner are accustomed to making decisions about learning objectives quite independently of one another. It is also pointed out that there is little known about factors that influence a person in the process of deciding whether, what and how to learn. Leadership will therefore be necessary to identify the kinds of changes in relationships that will allow management of learning as a joint venture to emerge. Further leadership will be required to implement the changes. Three broad areas are suggested for attention: social and individual needs identification, differentiation of roles and responsibilities as they relate to the education and the learning processes, and knowledge access.

Needs Identification

In a free society, the State is the instrument of the people. It establishes the goals to be achieved for appropriate development of available resources to satisfy the social as well as the economic interests of the people it serves. At the same time, the people are the instruments of the State. It is through their achievements to satisfy their individual goals that the goals of the State are met. The State therefore has as much interest in having realistic individual goals set and achieved as in setting and achieving the broad societal goals for which it has direct responsibility. The reverse must also be true. For the individual, goal achievement is a basic motivating factor in learning. There is therefore a common cause that apparently goes unrecognized by either State or individual since it is often necessary to use persuasion, incentive, lobby or other extraordinary strategies in order to encourage people to learn to achieve State and individual goals.

Information flow is basic to needs identification. Goals in which the State is prepared to make an investment present an opportunity for the individual. Leadership is needed in identifying the kind of information a person requires in order to understand social and economic opportunities sufficiently well to picture himself or herself in them. An individual must be able to see that he or she has the competencies required, or the capability to acquire them, and that personal goals can be satisfied. Once the kind of information required has been identified leadership is also required to find ways to communicate it effectively.

While little is known about decision-making processes related specifically to learning, there is an extensive literature in the areas of motivation and of human behaviour in decision-making generally. It should be safe to assume that generalized principles can be applied if care is taken to ensure that the specialized case of learning is understood and considered. At least, these principles can be the starting point of the leadership task.

Human behaviour is related to perceived problems standing in the way of, or opportunities leading to, individual goal achievement (Engel, Blackwell, Kollat, 1978).[1] Whether learning is behaviour that will be adopted to resolve the problems, or take advantage of the opportunity, will depend, at least in part, upon whether the person feels some responsibility for his or her own life (Knox, 1978).[2] People are motivated to learn something as a means to meet basic needs for survival, human interaction or personal growth (Lenz, 1980).[3] There is a negative attitude towards learning often found, even among those who participate in it, which causes people to stop short of learning the maximum amount to achieve their goals to the highest level (Lazear, 1977).[4]

Decision-making is not necessarily a rational process. At least thirty sources of bias have been documented from empirical studies (Remus, 1980).[5] Some biases that have particular relevance for providing information related to learning include the following. Selective availability -- a person will be inclined to base decisions on information that is readily available and ignore sources of significant information that requires effort to obtain. Personal interaction has more impact than impersonal presentation of data (Borgida, Nisbett, 1977).[6] Selective perception -- the mind has limited capacity to cope with different factors in making decisions and a person may therefore use only a portion of all of the data that are available (Egeth, 1967).[7] Selection of which portions to use will be made on the basis of past experience, to support a favoured outcome, to be consistent with the person's personal values and beliefs. The way in which information is presented -- the format of the information, whether the presentation is logical from the point of view of the decision-maker, the language of the presentation, can each contribute a bias to the decision (Slovic, Lichtenstein, 1971),[8] (Dickson, Senn, Chervany, 1977),[9] (Fischoff, Slovic, Lichtenstein, 1978).[10]

Each person performs his or her roles in society in a network of relationships with peers, family, social groups, role models, that share and influence values, beliefs and normal ways of doing things. A person finds his or her identity and source of satisfaction within the network. He or she is not likely to accept or act on information that is alien to the network (Rogers, Kincaid, 1981).[11] Each person performs a multiplicity of roles in home, community and at work. A change in the way of doing things in any one of the roles is likely to require changes in one or more of the others. Before information is used to make decisions, an adequate level of understanding, credibility and agreement about the value of the effects on the total system of roles must be achieved (Kincaid, 1975).[12]

If a common cause in learning is to be recognized, the State and the individual have need to communicate with one another in a way that will allow the State to understand individual needs and the individual to understand State objectives and the role he or she can play in their achievement. To do this the State needs knowledge of the individual's networks and systems. Information that is developed with a learner orientation, that takes into consideration sources of bias in decision-making and attitudes toward learning is an essential element in the needs identification process of both State and individual. Mass generalized data bases, such as census data are necessary, but not sufficient to provide the quality of information required for an effective communication process. To attempt to collect information directly from each individual is an impractical proposition from the State's perspective. The leadership that is required is to segment the population on the basis of identifiable networks and to find ways to maintain an effective two-way information flow to feed the needs of the identification process appropriately and continuously.

Role and Responsibility Differentiation

Joint venture management of learning distinguishes between roles and responsibilities based on differentiation of control. Whatever agency or person is the source of knowledge and has control over it, over the form it is given and the processes applied to aid its transfer. The person who wants the knowledge has control over how the knowledge is received, translated to his or her situation and eventually used.

The axiom "if the teacher hasn't taught the student hasn't learned" may well be accepted where a teacher is required to guide the education process toward transfer of knowledge. But the reverse cannot be accepted. To suggest that "if a student hasn't learned the teacher hasn't taught" vests responsibility on the teacher far beyond what the person can be expected to be held accountable for. There are complications that rest in the fact that from the perspective of many learners the major sources of knowledge are the agencies designated as educational institutions. These may be agencies with which learners have already had experience as children and youths and which have required them to surrender their freedom as a condition of access, as pointed out in the Alan Thomas paper. One complication arises from the fact that the agencies give their primary attention to the education process, make some assumptions about the learning process and thereby give the appearance of accepting responsibility for the entire knowledge transfer process. However, they refuse to accept accountability beyond the education process. Failure on the part of some of the learners is accepted as normal. The surrender of freedom to decide what and how he or she will learn in early experiences with educational agencies leads to the learner developing dependency on an agency for learning decisions. No distinction is made between the education process and the learning process and the focus of responsibility for each. The learner relies on the educational agency to provide for the learning process even though that process may have to be based on very generally based assumptions about the learner. Because the learner has not been helped to develop skills in establishing his or her own learning process he or she has no recourse but to accept the agency's judgement in the matter. In cases where the learning process is based on inaccurate assumptions about the learner, the knowledge transfer process becomes ineffective.

Leadership is needed in three areas to find ways to overcome this complication. First is to isolate the component parts of the learning process and the education process so that the agencies and the learners can make a clear identification of their roles and responsibilities. Second, leadership is needed to have agencies and learners accept their appropriate roles and responsibilities. The task here is to change expectations of both agency and learners about matters of control of and accountability for effectiveness of education and learning processes. Leadership will be required over a sustained period to change established habits or patterns of behaviour. Third, leadership is needed to find ways to include information about education and learning processes within the information flow that feeds need identification. The transfer of knowledge depends upon a close match between information and translation (Y1 and Y2 of the knowledge transfer process diagram) and between the education process and the learning process (X1 and X2). It is therefore as important to identify learner needs regarding process factors as it is to identify learner needs for subject matter for effective management of learning.

Another complication, attitude towards learning, is presented by the fact that major sources of knowledge for adult education are agencies designated as educational institutions. The requirement to surrender freedoms to decide what and how to learn in their early experiences may have been sufficient to generate negative feelings on the part of some people. If there are even minor resentments lingering from previous experiences with these institutions they may be magnified to major proportions and prevent a person from choosing learning as a means of solving a problem or taking the next step in personal growth.

Negative attitudes towards learning may also emanate from feelings that the institution has failed to serve the learner's needs, caused by a mismatch somewhere in the knowledge transfer process. Lack of credibility of the agency as an accessible source of knowledge, and of learning as a viable alternative for solution of problems can be the result. Leadership in identifying sources of influence on decision-making about learning will reveal the basis for current attitudes held and where to focus efforts to bring about changes in attitude.

Knowledge Access

Joint venture management of learning assumes close working relationships between the knowledge sources and those who need the knowledge. The objective of the management process is to enhance learning goal achievement of the individual which, in turn, contributes to achievement of social goals. The learner decides whether or not to learn something as a means of resolving a problem or of taking advantage of an opportunity. He or she also has the final say about how the something will be learned. The source of knowledge is in control of the decision about how the knowledge can and will be delivered. It is not easy for either to relinquish control. If the knowledge source fails to match the learner's needs in the transfer process, the knowledge may be rejected as being impractical. The knowledge source may adopt the attitude that if the learner needs the knowledge badly enough, he or she will conform, or "surrender" to its processes. The joint venture management proposal provides a basis for focusing attention on the objective, learning; and for sharing of responsibility for the outcome of the process.

The responsibility of the knowledge source is to make sure the learner has a reasonable chance to learn. The learner is responsible for whether or not learning actually takes place. To make sure the learner has a reasonable chance to learn, the knowledge source has responsibility to find ways to match Y1 to Y2 and X1 to X2 in the knowledge transfer process diagram.

Three areas related to learner access to knowledge need attention to facilitate joint venture management of learning: communication about knowledge levels of understanding knowledge and "packaging" of knowledge.

Communication About Knowledge. A learner needs information about what knowledge is available, and about the education processes by which the agency offers the knowledge, in order to make decisions about how the knowledge contributes to his or her goal achievement, whether or not the education process fits his or her view of how he or she learns best, and whether or not to enter into a transaction with the agency for the transfer of knowledge. Remembering that biases are endemic to decision-making, the information provided will have to be carefully composed by the knowledge source from an understanding of learners' orientations.

Levels of Knowledge. A person may know that certain knowledge exists, he or she may understand it well enough to think and talk about it, or he or she may understand it well enough to use it. Each is a different level of understanding. Each requires a different information and education process and different learning process and translation. Learner needs may be at any level. It may be enough that he or she knows that the knowledge exists, so that it can be searched out and learned at a different level when it becomes relevant. It may be important to understand it well enough to be considered intelligently among options for application to a specific problem or opportunity. To be used, the knowledge needs to be understood in depth and the consequences of its use within the individual's total system considered. Levels of understanding required to solve a problem or act on an opportunity are no doubt factors taken into consideration in the adult's decision to learn something. Access to knowledge at appropriate levels may be important to achieving the desired matching in the transfer process.

Standards of knowledge acquisition and who controls them are and will no doubt continue to be issues. There should be no difficulty in establishing standards at each level of understanding. The distinction between them has to be made. The distinctions, in turn, must be generally understood so that the additional processes and information needed to move from one level to the next can be applied when appropriate. In joint venture management of learning, the standards necessary to meet a particular need would be mutually agreed upon by all parties to the transaction and incorporated into the management process.

Packaging of Knowledge. Traditional approaches to "packaging" knowledge as courses, workshops, seminars, may not be appropriate in joint venture management of learning. They perpetuate the notion that the body that has the knowledge is in complete charge of the transfer process and that there is an element of surrender required of the learner as a condition of access. Further, with the knowledge explosion, it is becoming increasingly difficult to set up a satisfying bill of fare in the usual "cafeteria" of learning opportunities. Learners are often confronted with knowledge they don't need and bits are missing, no matter which package they choose. It is impossible for an agency to provide all of the bits of knowledge under its control in all possible combinations to meet learners' specific needs using the course, workshop, or seminar approach. Technology is available to have it otherwise. An important step in making knowledge accessible is to use technology, not to replicate traditional packages for transmission to distant learners, but to give learners access wherever they are to bits of knowledge that he or she can pull together into appropriate sequences, from any number of sources, in response to specific questions raised in the process of achieving the level of understanding needed to meet a particular objective.

With changes in the way knowledge is packaged, leadership will be required to rethink the matter of credentials. Certification as it is now known has more to do with teaching and with regulation of knowledge use than with learning. Certification tends to divert attention from the competencies required to solve a problem or act on an opportunity to the requirements to acquire a piece of paper. That is, attention is focused on how many courses or how many hours of instruction, rather than on what knowledge, what sequence of knowledge and why. Certification is the mark of the agency that issues it, more than of the person who carries it. The reverse will need to be true if the focus is to be on learning and if knowledge can be packaged so that it can be drawn from multiple sources.

Epilogue

Joint venture management of learning assumes that *it is desirable and feasible* for the State to be in effective communication with its constituency; that there is a common cause to be achieved through creation of a learning society. The payer and the dancers decide to their mutual benefit what tunes to call upon the piper to play. The piper, however, is no longer accountable for the quality of the dancing, except as it may be affected by the quality of the tune. These are strange roles for everyone. Dancers are used to "sitting out" until they hear their particular tune, not to taking part in calling it. Pipers are used to playing entire tunes, selecting the dancers and calling the steps, not to having the steps determine which bars of music will be played and in what sequence. Payers are used to sponsoring programmes of the classics, in whatever genre, to stimulate a common response from a large generalized audience, not twentieth century abstractions out of which individuals draw their own sense of rhythm. The outcome, though, will be a society of dancers, not as mindless puppets, but as competent, thoughtful individuals, each to a tune that has been carefully crafted by the dancer and the payer to create a masterpiece of choreography that reflects the best in each.

The challenge for leadership is to shift the unwieldy weight of the status quo, the fortress that shields well entrenched bases of power, because each of the actors needed to perform the masterpiece has a lifetime invested in his present role.

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In school ... and elsewhere - experiences

FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION :

Experiments in new university-community relationships, from a continuing education perspective

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FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Experiments in new university-community relationships, from a continuing education perspective

The CEFA (Commission d'étude sur la formation professionnelle et socioculturelle des adultes), a commission to study adult education for professional and personal interest, was created by the Government of Quebec on January 23, 1980 and presented its report, entitled Apprendre : une action volontaire et responsable (Learning: a voluntary and responsible action), on February 25, 1982.[1] This report was greatly enhanced by the process of consultation that led up to it:[2] there were 20 regional consultation days, 244 hearings in various cities throughout Quebec, many meetings with representatives from organizations, businesses and other groups, 276 briefs, notes and comments following special sectoral or intersectoral workshops, a colloquium of 400 people who gathered to discuss the Commission's initial orientation and organizational strategy, and many others. On the basis of such broad consultation, the Commission arrived at a global policy statement which gives appropriate weight to basic training while seeing self-education as an "indispensable tool for realizing the full human potential of Quebec", encouraging "decompartmentalizing the kinds of training" and "transformation of pedagogical practices... with the intent of 'deschooling' ", seeking to activate or re-activate new relationships between education and society in the field of continuing education, as well as between educational (and research) institutions and other kinds of bodies (businesses, groups and so on) or, in the jargon of continuing education theorists, between formal and non-formal education. Finally, the Commission proposed methods by which individuals and groups could participate in defining the orientation and managing and monitoring the policies and programmes of their training and education. This brief look at the CEFA's consultation process and the major outlines of its report will help, to some extent, to demonstrate the richness and relevance of the materials collected, with respect to the general problematical question of the contribution by Professor Alan Thomas as well as that of the seminar organized by the Canadian Commission for Unesco.

The briefs and comments sent to the CEFA during 1980 and 1981 have created an information source that naturally exceeds the limits of the report, which deals only incidentally with the relations between the universities and their partners in society. A study by the Faculty of Continuing Education at the Université de Montréal in the summer of 1982 taking advantage of this source more fully, tried to distinguish the most significant new concepts and trends in continuing education involving Quebec's universities.[3] Other studies and assessments have also shown the possibilities and risks involved in new relationships between the university and its social partners.[4] This paper takes certain ideas from these studies and summarizes the expectations expressed by some social partners and points out certain actions being undertaken by the universities to meet these expectations (I). Then, describing the broad area of university-society relationships from the perspective of the university's services to communities (II), we move on to some current or completed experiments that may show us the trends and pathways of the future (III).

I

Our analysis of the briefs and other documents from the union movement to the CEFA show that Quebec's labour associations, long linked to the educational institutions and other external resources and thus partially dependent on them, have, over the past decade, provided themselves with autonomous, soundly structured training services, taking responsibility - under the general guidance of the elected officials - for the orientation and management of the unions' training programmes.[5] Often tied in with union action and always anchored in the lives of the workers, these training programmes implement new educational practices. They deal with economic and social institutions, union organization, health and safety on the job, negotiation and enforcement of collective agreements, changes in employment and unemployment, transformation of work by the new technologies, preparation for retirement and so on. Guarding the essential independence of their training programmes and services jealously, the unions are calling for greater access to the Quebec university network and its resources, particularly its research potential, but also pedagogical and other expertise in the training of teachers.

Similar hopes and demands are coming from groups and associations active in the fields of consumerism, co-operatives, senior citizens and preparation for retirement, health, women's issues, housing and urban development, ecology and the environment, for example. These groups also want to preserve their autonomy and keep training closely related to action, and they too want better access to university resources, hoping to get university support in teaching methods, and professional single-field or interprofessional, interdisciplinary expertise in the most varied of fields.

Contrary to some opinions, a poll on training practices in the business world taken for the CEFA[6], showed how many and how important are the training activities and programmes: more than a third of the workers (male and female) questioned by the survey had taken part in training activities within the past year. Very often these were "on-the-job" training activities, related directly to the position occupied by the employee and to production, but often there were more formal activities as well, offered in two-thirds of the businesses covered by the survey. Obviously, there are many variations in the situations and opportunities for real access to training programmes depending on the size of the firm, its goals, fields of activity and the like, as well as on the positions occupied - management, professional, technical, specialists. Despite such diversity of situations and goals, close co-operation between business and the public educational (or research) institutions was generally favoured, respecting the specific interests and abilities of both partners.

From the briefs and other documents sent to the CEFA by the universities as well as the studies mentioned above, we see that the universities of Quebec have undertaken various actions and experiments in recent years, to help meet the needs expressed by various social groups and to welcome and serve new client groups.[7] These steps and experiments have often been placed explicitly within the domain of continuing education and its fundamental goals. (They have often been carried out within the framework of special continuing education centres, services, faculties or programmes.) For example, new programmes of study have been created, often for professional training or upgrading, fairly lightweight and sometimes "custom-tailored", borrowing from many disciplines and thereby meeting the requirements for more creative professional and social relations. As well, bachelor's and even master's programme requirements have been made more flexible, with varied components, putting increased emphasis on life and work experiences (as complementary methods of learning), in order to acquire and formalize new knowledge and increased skills. Fields of study have been broadened, pedagogical techniques have encouraged student autonomy and integration of all learning, experiments and research have been undertaken to encourage the spread of knowledge and to put the university's resources at the service of the developmen of community groups previously ignored because of various economic, social or cultural reasons.[8]

These experiments and new practices that we have hastily sketched here have a common aim, despite differing methods and approaches, of establishing new relationships between the university and its partners or, in other words, between formal and non-formal education. In this way, they belong within the broad perspectives of continuing education.

In today's world, one can no longer maintain that there is one time - or a set of times - for learning and others for living, working or being, nor are there some places for learning and others for action and production: work itself, leisure, the media, community action and the rest are places and sources of varied learning. The educational institutions must reckon with these many partners from now on. Thus, there is no question of requiring everyone to return to the tiresome school desks of their youth or the larger, but no more comfortable ones of university. The CEFA's report has demonstrated this in showing the importance of self-teaching and learning through community action. This being said and recognized, the universities still remain resource centres and special places for learning, whose usefulness must not be minimized, if they will keep in mind the imperatives of the new way of seeing and experiencing the relationship with scholarship and thus the relations between the university and its community or communities.

Leaving aside the activities more directly linked to the new relations between education and the workplace, such as co-operation and collaboration between the university and business, co-operative programmes and the like, I would like to focus here on a number of experiences trying to establish new points of contact between popular education (and community action) and union training on one hand and the university's resources and services on the other.

II

It would probably be useful, before we examine the new activities described below, to recall the major arguments in a debate that has been opened and re-opened for a number of years, in Quebec and in many other places in America and Europe, regarding the social function of the university.

In Quebec, the debate over the social function of the university and the concept of the university's service to the community - or communities - in recent years has been largely stimulated by various projects carried out by the Conseil des universités, the Commission to study the universities and the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, and by their statements, opinions and recommendations. The experiments and study carried out by continuing education services in various universities have also inspired and provided fuel for these studies, statements and recommendations.[9] In these documents, service to the community is often described as an all-inclusive function - or dimension or perspective or orientation -that gives the university's essential roles (teaching and research) their meaning and social significance. This is the point of view found, for example, in the report of the co-ordinating committee of the Commission to study the universities (1979). Service to the community is also spoken of as a "third role"; under this heading come a number of activities which, while linked to research and teaching (or training), do not fit into the regular, institutional programmes. The report of the study committee on the university and Quebec society, part of the Commission to study the universities, acknowledges this concept when it talks about "the diversity of services offered as part of relations with society and the ever more complex and diverse demands made by social groups" (1979).

In either case, the concept of service(s) to the community - or communities - is related to ideas of democratizing the university and, more broadly speaking, knowledge, which in turn calls for the establishment of new relations between the university and the society or community, especially between the university and marginal social groups or communities who have little access to established or future knowledge. There is broad consensus on this social and cultural goal. Moreover, those who hold either of the beliefs described above agree that the services rendered by the university to particular social groups or to the community as a whole ought to respect the nature of the university, as well as its educational and cultural role and its necessary link to knowledge. In one instance, they would wish a social viewpoint to affect training and research activities profoundly; in the other, they would like clearer identification and official recognition of the services which, although an extension of the usual activities and programmes involved in research and teaching, go somewhat beyond these, causing a change.

In the analysis or transformation of relationships between the university and the society or community, it is important to keep in mind the diversity of the universities' positions and their possible roles and services. Thus, the situation of a "central" university is different from that of a regional or "peripheral" university, and the expectations for each differ as well. A university may also provide different services to a union office or a housing co-operative, taking the needs and requests of the groups into account and also the state of knowledge in various fields (gerontology, for example, or health and safety on the job) and the expertise created by research teams.

Nevertheless, it is possible to point out certain trends and - more concretely - certain activities which have become part of university life in Quebec in recent years, as manifestations of the general wish for democratization mentioned above. These include: action to broaden access to university studies (increased flexibility in admission requirements, information, orientation and counselling policies, adaptation of teaching techniques, multiplication of campuses and centres, and so on); creation of programmes in new fields of knowledge and socio-professional practice (gerontology, health and safety on the job, and so on); co-operation between levels and between organizations enabling universities, Cegeps, secondary schools and other organizations to offer large parts of the population the educational services they require to face new life and work situations; efforts to disseminate research findings in order to have the greatest possible number of citizens aware of the knowledge, analysis and methods that would enable them to gain more effective conscious control over their lives and environment - what is often meant by the expression "promotion culturelle" (raising cultural standards); and others. It is easy, but unnecessary, to continue the list of projects and activities aimed at democratizing learning and the public institutions that hold to this belief, universities in particular. The recent report of the CEFA makes full reference to this - one only need read its report.

All such actions by the universities and other educational institutions are aimed at the individual or improvement of a growing number of citizens and thus, of course, improvement of the community as a whole. Other activities and projects in the same vein differ in that, through research, preparing and providing training or offering expertise, they assist in community improvement of social groups - unions, popular movements and so on - which, as groups, need better access to knowledge and its creation. These are the activities and projects that shall concern us here.

The debate over the social function of the university or the university's service to communities is not limited to Quebec, even though it has taken on a particular colouring and flavour there. One need only look at the preparatory studies for the international conference on *higher education and the community: new forms of exchange and co-operation* organized in Paris in 1980 by the OECD. One of these background studies, on *institutional mechanisms for interaction between higher education and the community,*[10] covered some thirty institutional experiments carried out in Germany (University of Bayreuth), Australia (University of New England, Armindale; New South Wales Institute of Technology, Broodway; La Trobe University, Melbourne), Belgium (Universities of Liège and Louvain), Canada (Université de Sherbrooke; University of Waterloo; University of British Columbia, Vancouver), Denmark (University of Denmark, Lyngby), Finland (Tampere), France (Compiègne, Dijon, Les Milles-Aix-Marseille II, Mons, Rouen), Great Britain (University of Strathclyde, Glasgow; Polytechnic of North London, London), Italy (University of Pavia), Norway (University of Trondheim, Dragvoll), the United States (Boston, Detroit, Green Bay, Irvine, Madison, Mississippi, New York, Philadelphia) and Turkey (Ataturk University, Erzwum).

The institutional experiments surveyed covered very diverse fields of study and forms of action or intervention, from technology (as in Mons, France, bringing together the State University and the Mons Polytechnic with the National silicate institute and the economic development association of the Centre and Borinage regions; or as in Liège, associating the Université de Liège with the Centre for Metallurgical Research), to science and letters (as at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.A.), not forgetting the environment (University of Wisconsin, Green Bay), agriculture (Ataturk University, Erzwum, Turkey), minority rights (College of Public and Community Service, University of Massachusetts, Boston, U.S.A.), public health (University of Pavia, Italy), urban planning (University of Pavia; the City/University Consortium of Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A.) or economic development and the quality of life (University of Southern Mississippi, U.S.A.)...

Other universities reported on their experiences during the conference itself. Among these were the Swedish universities of Lulea and Lund (in co-operation with the universities of Karlstad and Sundsvall) which assisted the union movement;[11] the University of Hiroshima which reported on its research activity in nuclear diseases, peace and the environment; the University of Vienna in the fields of agriculture and technology and the English polytechnical schools,[12] among others.

Thus, the OECD's international conference on *higher education and the community: new forms of exchange and co-operation*, took the point of view of "redefining the roles of higher education institutions". The conference attempted to better define and clarify the community's expectations of higher education institutions, the ways and means used in these institutions' responses, the institutional mechanisms for interaction between higher education and the community, the consequences of such interaction on the institutional structure, the content of teaching and teaching methods and research.

As early as July 1979, the steering committee for the conference sent invited groups a note reminding them of "a number of key questions about the role and responsibility of higher education in the social, economic and cultural development of the community, particularly at the local and regional levels."[13] They noted the various social pressures leading to "a redefinition of the essential functions of higher education: teaching, research and service". For the authors of that document, such a distinction showing three functions - teaching, research and service - was convenient, even though the idea of service to the community, in the broad sense, includes and covers the first two. It shows that a certain proportion of the interactions between the community and higher education are not necessarily found in the traditional forms of teaching and research.

In preparation for the conference, a survey was also conducted of 150 institutions of higher education and various groups and organizations. That survey showed that, amongst the great diversity of methods the institutions used in responding to the needs and expectations of their societies, the fields most frequently covered by university activities or experiments in service to the community were: health, work (organization and working conditions), the environment, the economy and employment.

We find here certain constants and certain trends that appear in the Quebec experience as well, which I shall now present briefly.

III

According to the universities' reports to CEFA, the idea of service to the community as explained above has been developed particularly at Montreal's two francophone universities, where it has taken on a social and political connotation by trying to make the university's resources accessible to the population groups that have been traditionally distant or actually excluded. In other places, "service to the community" seems to refer primarily to the regional community. Among the Quebec universities that officially recognize the university's community service role and/or have some concrete achievements in this area to their credit, we have noticed: the UQAM which has had a general policy and a number of practices for a number of years now, primarily tied in to the union movement; the Université de Montréal, where a group has been conducting resarch and experiments in the field since 1975; the Université de Sherbrooke; all components in the Université du Québec network, to differing degrees and by various methods; and, more recently, the Université Laval. The major fields covered or themes explored have included: preparation for retirement and the condition of retired persons; consumerism and economic training; union training and health and safety on the job; work and working conditions; the employment and unemployment crisis; new technology and communications; the status of women; housing and urban development, the environment and agricultural land use.

Next we shall present just two institutional experiments and analyze their activity programmes: a UQAM programme under the UQAM-CNTU-QFL agreement,[14] and a Université de Montréal programme under an agreement with the FRAPRU.[15]

1. Training in health and safety on the job, under the UQAM-CNTU-QFL agreement

The Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) signed an agreement in 1975 with the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU) and the Quebec Federation of Labour (QFL) establishing a general framework for co-operation whose "objective was to make the human and technical resources of the University accessible to the workers and their labour organizations, within the framework of non-credit educational activities".

Within this general agreement, a programme of training in health and safety on the job was drawn up and courses began in 1979. During the programme's first three years (1979-80, 1980-81 and 1981-82) the number of training activities (courses) numbered 29, then 62, then 58, with 741, then 2,022 and 1,714 participants. Although basic training activities (courses) were the most numerous at first, by 1981-82 the programme was made up of three roughly equal parts -basic training, specialized training and advanced training - which also represents the general distribution of participants. University resources have come to be directed mainly toward the advanced training sessions. The themes covered are varied: general problems of health and safety on the job, problems related to noise, dust, lighting, chemicals, CRT screens, taking into account the variety of working environments and personal situations (such as pregnant women), investigative methods, and so on.

There is a gradual transition from seeking knowledge discovered by research (research-action) to the production of new knowledge, leading to the planning and organization of research-training activities or courses. In addition, the production of information documents and training tools, which has become one of the major elements contributed by the university, makes it possible to spread knowledge more widely and multiplies the effects of the activities.

2. Educational activities in housing and urban development, as a result of co-operation between the U de M and FRAPRU

In 1975 a working group exploring ways the university could participate in popular education was created in the Faculty of Continuing Education at the Université de Montréal and immediately became involved in creating a housing co-operative in the Pointe-St-Charles area, thus opening up a new field for study and intervention - housing and urban development. A number of other similar collaborations took place in following years. In 1977, some new groups created to defend citizens' rights and interests in the housing and urban development field, particularly in conflicts with "neighbourhood improvement programmes" requested the Université de Montréal's help in preparing, holding and following up on a seminar in October 1978. Twenty groups from eight regions of Quebec then joined together in a formal group, known since May 1979 as the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU). Shortly thereafter, an agreement between FRAPRU and the Faculty of Continuing Education (U de M) established the framework for co-operation and a programme of more structured educational activities.

This co-operation took many forms: information and awareness sessions (37 groups), a play (25 performances for 2,300 spectators in all), training sessions (7 courses, 100 participants), creation of information documents and analyses of government policies and programmes, training for trainers, expert advice and organizational support.

One can easily see from the cases presented that certain social groups are somewhat "privileged". (Which is why we have preferred to say "service to communities" rather than "service to the community".) Some social groups already have access to established knowledge and to the production of such knowledge: for example, the professional corporations whose members are all university graduates and have retained their "entrées" there, or large industrial corporations which have their own research and training departments. But there are others who do not have such entrées: labour unions (white or blue collar and agricultural workers) and groups of militant citizens concerned with their rights in the areas of work, working conditions, housing, the environment, living conditions, aging and retirement and so on. It is certainly not up to the universities to take charge of defending the rights and interests of such groups, but they can and should make the necessary, strictly educational services and resources - including research, training, information and counter-information - accessible and available to these groups so that they may take up their own responsibilities. Thus, these services to communities work toward the community improvement of such groups and communities and the promotion of their rights and interests.

The challenges and risks of this kind of action by the universities are considerable, as are the problems. They have been mentioned often. In fact, the university is obliged to question certain habits and - more seriously - ask questions in new ways: questions of epistemology, as well as social, political and structural questions. These are basic questions for the university and touch its essence and foundation. The university probably should entertain requests from groups and communities and not from individuals, asking for collaboration in defining research and training concerns and participation in offering training oriented determinedly to transformational action. It should also welcome new partners, along with new questions, to determine how to analyze and answer these questions. Finally, with these partners, it should redefine the specific details of its contributions to such collaborative activities.

Once the requests addressed to the university by its partners have been translated (faithfully, which is not easy!) and perhaps trimmed of certain elements (more directly related to the group itself and its own programme for action), they elicit responses from the university that are quite closely related to its roles or functions of teaching (training) and research. They are thus eminently receivable, and it only remains to decide whether they are feasible or appropriate. That is, after the request and the university's resources have been analyzed a response that truly satisfies both parties is found. Here it is important to have an institutional framework, policy and criteria to verify or establish what university intervention is required, from the perspective described above.

While requests usually fit rather easily into the general, somewhat theoretical frame of the teaching (training) or research roles traditionally recognized as proper to the university, they can provoke considerable disruption in the university when the response is inappropriate. Here we point to research, of course, and the scientific researcher's rigourous requirements cannot be evaded. But participation by the requesting group in the research affects both the presenting problem and the methodology. In other cases, it will be a matter of training and the quality of training will require co-operation from university resources. But respect for the request and for the group making it, its expectations and needs, will mean that the university must take unfamiliar paths, not like its regular programmes. More generally, training and research activities are often in constant interaction in an overall educational balance, rooted in action and oriented to action.

Thus, new relationships must be established:

- between research and action and between the researcher and the action group, between the university and a given group or community and
- between training and action - a link at the source and at the goal of action - and thus, here too, between the university and its partners.

Without sacrificing either scientific rigour or the experiential roots of all knowledge, we must have two forms - two worlds - of knowledge which, not mutually exclusive, are mutually enriching and lead to continuous learning as required by life in today's society.[16]

NOTES

1. CEFA (Commission d'étude sur la formation des adultes), Apprendre : une action volontaire et responsable. Énoncé d'une politique globale de l'éducation des adultes dans une perspective d'éducation permanente (Learning: a voluntary and responsible action. An overall policy statement regarding adult education from the continuing education perspective), Quebec City, 1982.

2. In the fall of 1982, Mrs. Michèle Jean, former chairman of the Commission, was invited to take part in various projects sponsored by Unesco's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). The Institute was particularly interested in the Commission's consultative procedures. These procedures were also given particular attention by the Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes (ICEA), which was appointed by the Canadian Commission for Unesco to collaborate with the national commissions of France, Greece, Israel, the Federal Republic of Germany and Yugoslavia in a joint study of participation by various social groups in educational planning and the educational process.

3. Bourgeault, Guy, Julio Fernandez, Fernand Gauthier, Pierre Pâquet, Les pratiques d'éducation permanente au Québec et les universités (Continuing Education and the universities in Quebec), Montreal, (Faculty of Continuing Education, Université de Montréal), 1982. As part of this study, 81 briefs and other documents submitted to the CEFA were analyzed by Mrs. Colette Chatillon. Twenty of these documents came from business, nine from the labour movement, thirty-one from universities and the other twenty-one from associations and organizations interested in the relationship between universities and their other educational partners for various reasons. The list of briefs and other documents appears in the study's appendix.

4. The evaluation reports used will be indicated later when presenting the case studies of university service to communities.

5. Chiasson, Béatrice, Les besoins de l'éducation syndicale et l'éducation permanente (The needs of union education and continuing education), Montreal (U de M/FEP), 1968; Pierre Amyot, Jacynthe Deault and Kenneth Heer, Enquête sur l'éducation syndicale au Québec (A study of union education in Quebec), Montreal (U de M), 1972; Michel Lizée, L'apport de l'université à la formation syndicale (The university's contribution to union training), Montreal (UQAM), 1974; Julio Fernandez, Familiarisation avec les pratiques de formation syndicale et exploration de pistes de collaboration (Familiarization with union training practices and exploration of pathways for collaboration), Montreal (U de M/FEP), 1977; Julio Fernandez, Le programme d'aide financière à l'éducation ouvrière du Québec (The financial assistance programme for worker education in Quebec), Montreal (U de M/FEP), 1981.

6. In addition to the study mentioned in note 3 (p. 67 - 102), see also: Pierre Pâquet and Pierre Doray, Les pratiques de formation en entreprise (Training practices in business), Appendix to the report of the Commission d'étude sur la formation des adultes, Quebec City, 1983.

7. According to official statistics from the Quebec Department of Education (August 1982), Quebec's universities had 191,000 students in 1981-82, of whom 46% (89,000) were full-time and 54% (102,000) were part-time. These figures alone show how important the new relationships between studies and professional and social experience are for Quebec universities.

8. I have surveyed these continuing education programmes and these new practices and approaches in an article, entitled *Perfectionnement professionnel et universités québécoises: émergences et convergences* (Continuing professional education in Quebec universities: new ideas and trends), in *Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education,* X/1 (January, 1984), p. 40-52.

9. Many citations and references will be found in the study by André Fortin *et al, Collectivités et université : vers de nouveaux rapports* (Communities and the university: toward a new relationship), Montreal (Faculty of Continuing Education, U de M), 1983. This study sums up *five years of experiments at the Université de Montréal* (1975-1980).

10. OECD/CERI (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation), *Les mécanismes institutionnels de l'interaction entre l'enseignement supérieur et la collectivité* (Institutional mechanisms for interaction between higher education and the community), Paris (OECD), 1980. See also: note from the Conference Secretariat: *Les mécanismes institutionnels de l'interaction entre l'enseignement supérieur et collectivité, résumé et principaux problèmes* (Institutional mechanisms for interaction between higher education and the community: summary and major problems), Paris (Château de la Muette), February 4 - 6, 1980.

11. *Quatre cas de coopération entre syndicats de travailleurs et universités (ou collèges universitaires)* (Four case studies in co-operation between unions and universities (or colleges)), Stockholm, 1980; Paris (Château de la Muette), February 4 - 6, 1980.

12. This brief list shows clearly that concern for increased university service to communities is apparent everywhere in the North Atlantic countries. Over and above these examples, however, there are some experiments that, because they are more closely related to Quebec practices, deserve closer study. Such an example is that of the Faculté ouverte de politique économique et sociale (FOPES) (Open faculty of political and social economics) at the Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. This faculty was created in 1974 based on work that the Fondation Travail-Université (Labour and university foundation) had been carrying on since 1967, involving Belgium's French-language universities and the Mouvement ouvrier chrétien (Christian workers movement) and on the "awareness of the specific problems posed by under-development and growth in Wallonia", which resulted. FOPES organizes and provides, to adults in the midst of their working lives and "having had no access to traditional university networks", "training in political and social economics at a level equivalent to a university degree". This programme's aim is "thus, to contribute to the training of agents for change, motivated and able to define and put into action the alternatives needed for the development of Wallonia." A "full" faculty, it is nevertheless managed in a different way from the other parts of the Université catholique de Louvain: by a board composed equally of representatives of the university and the Mouvement ouvrier chrétien,

which institutionalizes the participation of communities from the working world in the Faculty's management and in the guidance of its courses and other activities. In 1980 the Faculty had some 150 students, in groups of about 25 throughout the varied regions of francophone Belgium. The experiment's goals, as described by those who presented its story are: democratization of access to training (by locating groups and training activities in a number of regions), democratization of the pedagogical role (by encouraging "learning based more on exchanges of experience than on the hierarchical and unilateral transmission of theoretical or academic content"), democratization of the management of the training institution (by the joint board and group councils and considerable self-management of the groups). Cf. *L'Université catholique de Louvain (UCL) et la collectivité* (UCL and the community), Paris (Château de la Muette), February 4 - 6, 1980.

13. Note from the Secretariat, Paris, July 25, 1979.
This note is based heavily on a report by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, OECD, on the general theme of the conference: (78) 12, Paris, 1978. CERI/CD.

14. Cf. Alain Dunberry, *Évaluation des activités en santé et sécurité au travail dans le cadre du protocole UQAM-CSN-FTQ* (Evaluation of the activities related to health and safety on the job under the UQAM-CNTU-QFL agreement), Montreal (Faculty of Continuing Education, U de M), 1982.

15. Cf. Evelyne Tardy and Pierre Pâquet, *Le Service aux collectivités : encore un travail de pionniers. Évaluation de cinq années d'expériences éducatives à l'Université de Montréal* (Service to communities: another pioneering job. Evaluation of five years of educational experiments at the Université de Montréal), Montreal (Faculty of Continuing Education, U de M), 1982.

16. These points of view - or these challenges - may be studied in more detail in the report evaluating three institutional experiments in serving the community submitted to the Conseil des universités du Québec in 1982 by Guy Bourgeault (Université de Montréal), Pierre Gladu (UQAM) and Robert Routhier (Université de Sherbrooke).

LEARNING IN RURAL SOCIETY

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LEARNING IN RURAL SOCIETY

Rural communities in Canada are not readily described. Some are located near large centres, some are unbelievably remote; some are closely integrated in small clusters of households, some are sparsely strung along great stretches of roadway; some claim a singular occupational focus such as farming, fishing, logging or mining, while others have occupational pluralism; some are beginning, some have mixtures of newcomers among long-established residents, and some communities are nearly dead. Also, some communities are more prosperous than others.

For the purpose of this paper, these diverse features of rural communities are acknowledged and passed by in favour of a general description. The rural area is characterized by a small population which has limited access to social institutions; which has restricted access to consumer goods and services, restricted opportunity to relate to others, restricted opportunity for employment, restricted mobility, and a lower standard of living than is generally found in urban areas.

These characteristics of rural life are limitations only when they are viewed in relation to opportunities in urban settings. They do not imply that rural dwellers must, because of their place of residence, be ill-developed persons. No argument is made here for the relative merits of rural and urban living. Instead, the purpose is to acknowledge rural differences. The rural community does not permit individuals access to the range of social, economic, political or cultural opportunity which is possible in an urban setting. This being so, we are left to consider the implications for learning as it relates to rural society. I will do so by reviewing some of the characteristics of the learning society and discussing the features of rural community which foster and hinder those characteristics. I will mention the need for a shared definition of learning in order to permit wide discussion of the learning society. I will outline a contradiction between rural residents' approach to informal education and their treatment of the formal system. Finally, I will discuss the need for educational agencies to treat rural differences differently.

These points are made entirely from the perspective of my own experience as a lifelong rural resident, and as an adult educator in that setting. I have no systematic, empirical data to support them. They are simply strongly-felt impressions which would benefit from rigorous testing in the diverse circumstances that make up rural Canada.

Learning

More than ten years after the Faure Report we still find that its concepts continue to challenge us to "think through the whole educational system afresh." A key way to deal with this challenge is to have an agreed-on definition of learning. Without establishing a common language about what we call "learning," it is difficult to have agreement about the way it ought to be achieved. A sufficiently general definition of learning will permit us to contend with the challenge of developing a learning society. It will also encourage the necessary search to go on for a more precise understanding of learning. That understanding is justifiably complicated by such concerns as the effect of experience on cognitive development about the role of the environment, or about the way genetic structures condition learning. They are concerns which must be settled, but our preoccupation with these puzzles must not impede our push to broaden the context in which learning, as we now understand it, takes place.

John Dewey gave us a general way to define learning: it is a process of development which takes place when we structure experiences and gain meaning from them. The result is a change in the course of subsequent experiences. Dewey connected the notions of living and learning to form a thread in which learning is essential to continued development and continued development is essential to living. This definition avoids the argument-generating notions of observable change and of accumulated knowledge as essential features of learning.

Thomas' treatment of the nature of learning in the basic document for this symposium stresses both the individuality of learning and that it is an activity. I would add that it is also deliberate. Perhaps Thomas meant to imply deliberateness when he wrote that learning "must be won by whoever wishes it to occur in another." At any rate, it is apparent that society deliberately sets up circumstances which, in turn, cause the individual to be deliberately engaged in learning. When, for example, it establishes high school completion, or a university degree as necessary for admission to particular jobs and professions it is establishing specific circumstances which compel involvement in learning.

These few attributes: individual, active, deliberate, experience structuring, and essential part of living, are, in my view, sufficient to serve as an appropriate base for discussing the learning society. They are broad terms, but they hit the essentials of learning without pulling us into debates about method and measurement. They permit discussion of the concept of the learning society which takes into account that people learn everywhere during all of their lives, using all of society with its social, economic and even its formal educational resources.

To subscribe to the idea of a learning society is to remove dogmatism and to achieve a situation in which the search for answers is everyone's business, and where judgements cannot be made without evidence to support them. The learning society is far less concerned with initiating specific learning experiences for individuals than with maintaining a climate in which individuals deliberately seek out their learning experiences to the point of being able to control the direction of their own development. The learning society is one in which the stage is always set for individuals to deliberately initiate their lifelong development.

Formal Education in Rural Areas

Our rural society reflects the value of society in general in its attention to the formal education of youth. Children are bused over long distances to attend regional schools where they follow the curriculum which the respective province offers in all its schools. There is basically no rural distinction. Curriculum uniformity is a manifestation of the principle of equal opportunity. From the viewpoint of the learning society, it ignores the notion of relating learning to the lives of the learner. The sheer weight of our urban population size relative to the rural one, and the fact that our curriculum builders work from urban centres, would be sufficient to suggest that both the purpose and the process of the formal educational enterprise in rural areas are dominated by urban values. There appears to be no evidence of effort on the part of curriculum builders to develop rural society through the formal education system.

The emphasis on education in rural schools and in the small number of rural universities is rooted in urban goals. Students are prepared for an urban-oriented world of work. Those youths who do not meet requirements of the formal education system will remain in their communities. They have "failed" the system and, consequently, do not meet urban employment demands. Since education for employment in a rural milieu was not a goal of the education system they are even more poorly prepared to meet demands for high-quality performance in rural employment.

This is not to say that these communities lack creative and energetic people. It says only that their society does not foster its own development by structuring learning experiences in a way that youth can attend to their immediate environment as an integral part of formal education. Those who choose to remain in the rural setting as a place to live and work do so as "failures" of the school system or as ones who subscribe to rural values despite the absence of those values in the school. Such neglect of their own values is cause for curiosity. In the present situation, it seems less a matter of having rural society foster the learning society as having it foster its own survival. At least in the context of the formal education of its youth, rural society is not endeavouring to stay alive.

Nor is the learning society being fostered through formal educational programmes for adults. In fact, there are very few formal learning opportunities for them in these areas. If ever there was a case for broadening our view of what constitutes an appropriate learning environment we will find it in society's neglect of the formal learning needs of adults. It is virtually impossible for schools and universities to meet their range of requirements for courses. Those who try are plagued by insufficient registrations, insufficient staff, and the inflexible requirements of educational institutions. Agencies which deliver programmes relating to employment (e.g., training in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, labour) are faced with similar problems which they tend to solve by having the learner attend courses in urban locations, or by correspondence study. The failure of educational institutions in this regard is an offense of sufficient magnitude to warrant a Royal Commission to properly describe it. Even with overall disregard for the imperatives of a learning society, we still remain unaware of this injustice to our rural population.

The possibility of spanning long distances with new developments in communication technology is presenting a way to break out of the straight-jacket of formal instruction modes and attend more fully to the dimensions of the learning society. Distance programmes, mediated in a variety of ways, promise to solve some of the problems which prevent educational agencies from properly serving rural adults. As various forms of technology are developed for communicating over long distances, educators are faced with the demands to restructure programmes. As they do so, they open the way to rethink such basic curriculum tenets as the requirements of the subject area, the requirements of the learner, the location and selection of appropriate learning resources, and the evaluation of course outcomes. This rethinking is bound to focus new attention on the circumstances of the learner. There is irony in this: the cold, impersonal, distance-spanning machines are pushing educators to programme according to the constraints of the individual learner. With improved technology we now have opportunity to do what our rhetoric has espoused; to customize instruction for the individual.

Informal Learning in Rural Areas

Rural society is naturally rich in opportunity for informal learning experiences. It is in striking contrast with the opportunity for formal learning. Such circumstances as distance from services, of breakdowns in routine because of severe climate, and of scarce supplies, require rural residents to be inventive. They learn to solve problems, often in novel ways; to build on experience gained over generations, and to be watchful for better solutions.

Voluntary organizations form a principal source of informal learning opportunity in rural areas. Some agencies have developed excellent programmes to provide learning experiences through voluntary work. The Women's Institutes and 4-H Clubs are two specifically rural examples. Another is the relatively recent phenomenon of the rural fire department which usually manages to involve everyone in the community in ventures that range from mobilizing an antique pumper to instruction on life-saving procedures. Local circumstances and voluntary ingenuity usually determine the choice of projects within the rural fire department. In large measure, local circumstances also dictate the projects undertaken by 4-H Clubs and Women's Institutes.

An examination of the way voluntary organizations function from one community to the next might provide clues about the performance of rural society as a learning society. Those voluntary organizations which allow for a relatively free choice of projects, as distinct from prescribed projects, thrive very well in these areas. How much does their ability to have projects that mesh with local interests account for the success of 4-H Clubs and Women's Institutes? Do organizations of this kind, because they are rooted in practical and idiosyncratic concerns, afford greater learning opportunity than do more formal educational organizations? It is pointless to speculate about possible answers. These questions require careful research. They are questions with potential for describing the association between the learning opportunities afforded by voluntary organizations and learning in rural society and for describing the relationship between living and learning.

Prospects for Change?

This brief survey of formal and informal education in rural areas suggests, albeit with insufficient evidence, that rural society adheres to the dictates of the formal educational system without challenging or, perhaps, without noticing that the formal education system is essentially an urban system. There also appears to be a contradiction between the independent, problem-solving ability of rural persons and their failure to challenge educational systems to provide services for adults. It is as if rural dwellers find little reason to insist on those services, and see little connection between what they learn on their own and what might be learned through a formal system. Perhaps they don't recognize their problem-solving experience as a form of learning. Perhaps because of their formal education experience, with its urban values, they think of learning as something sufficiently lacking in what we term the basic elements (individual, active, experience-structuring, essential part of living) that it is not the sort of rewarding venture in which one would engage on a lifelong basis. Perhaps they view education as a dismal, necessary evil. Perhaps. Speculation again.

An indicator of the development of the learning society is the continuity achieved between living and learning; between knowing and being able to do; between experience and one's continuing development. As the continuity increases, it forms a kind of unity where the individual determines what shall be learned and what resources will be used. The learner becomes the subject for educational effort and what is to be learned takes precedence over what is to be taught. If it is indeed true that the independent, resourceful, problem-solving rural residents recognize no connection between what they do on their own and what they are required to do by educational institutions, then from the standpoint of continuity, rural society is far from being a learning society. A learning society does not tolerate such disunity and disassociation of its resources for learning.

To close this presumed gap between the life-related informal learning and the formal education programmes, will require deliberate effort to change. The requirement to create greater unity between the formal and informal learning resources of rural society will likely fall heaviest on established educational institutions. They have set themselves apart as the dispensers of knowledge, as the brokers of wealth-producing credentials. They are unlikely to be challenged directly by the rural resident to change, but they are otherwise being challenged. One form of challenge is the increasing tendency of industry to sponsor its own training programmes. Another is the disappointed graduates who find that the promise of a job at the end was not fulfilled. The formal education system is being challenged by machines which enable learners to be selective and self-directed. And perhaps, for all of these reasons and more, it is being challenged by diminishing financial support.

Thomas observed that educational agencies may be beginning to decline in importance. In the interest of the learning society, it is necessary that those agencies change the way they provide service and recognize that a broad range of learning resources exists beyond their boundaries. This kind of shift in the way educational agencies approach learning will be of greater benefit to the learning society than if there were to be a decline in their importance. Indeed, formal educational agencies will become vitally important as they recognize their role in fostering the learning society. We need formal educational agencies in the learning society that will ensure individual, active, deliberate, experience-structuring, essential to living, learning. This type of educational agency is more possible now than when the Faure Report first posed its challenge.

THE POLITICS OF PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING

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THE POLITICS OF PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING

A) Of kicking and pulling

> "A mule can't kick when it's pulling"
>
> \- a steelworker participant at a recent course on the quality of working life.

The working document prepared by Alan Thomas maps future directions for lifelong learning in Canada. I want to help pull the field in that direction as well, but before straining into the harness some critical comments seem necessary. First the kicks, and then the pulling.

My critique centres on the need to situate learning, so eloquently described and defended by Dr. Thomas, in a social dynamic that is more explicitly defined. The aim is to balance the focus of his article from "learning" to "society". My proposal is to complement the humanistic spirit of Dr. Thomas with an explicit commitment to democratizing learning at a time when technology and politics seem to be in the opposite direction.

Let me state my own biases at the start, which flow from three sources of learning. Primarily, there is my experience in the last five years as a pratising trade unionist, assigned to educational work. Secondly, there is my continuing dialogue with Alan Thomas and other Canadian adult educators since I first entered the field fourteen years ago. Thirdly, there is my interest in the practice of popular education in the Third World, reflected today in the workers' education programme of the International Council for Adult Education.

The lump of clay upon which these three influences have worked has, of course, some internal characteristics. Let me state bluntly my personal conviction that adult education can and should be part of a broad popular movement for social and political change. Let me also admit to a personal taste for debate and controversy, a sense that real illumination of a topic requires some heat as well as light.

Reflecting on these influences and assessing these personal views may help the reader to locate this particular mule in the field of learning.

B) Competing points of departure

> "Each step in your explanation seems so rational. Give me a few minutes to figure out why the conclusions make me so uneasy"
>
> \- an adult educator at a recent workshop.

The paper by Dr. Thomas is explicit about learning but implicit about society. His axioms about the nature of learning are clear, forceful and original, but there is no comparable weight given to the social context in which learning occurs. We are left to piece together his social assumptions from sections of the text.

Clearly, Dr. Thomas stands for the individual integrity of the learner, and resists a "totalitarian impulse" in more collective learning processes. When he deals with responses to this individual learning, he portrays society as an actor, an embodiment of underlying value consensus. His perspective on management of learning, then, is as the negotiation between the individual and the state, the concrete expression of the social will. In this negotiation, a positive mediating role can be played by voluntary organizations, labour organizations and distance education organizations.

This social model is familiar, but I for one do not find it helpful. Collective learning is possible, I suggest, and as valid and liberating as individual learning. Society is energized by conflict, rather than maintained by consensus. The state is primarily an instrument of those who hold power, rather than a neutral arbiter among interest groups. Any individual who tries to negotiate with the state (even in the relatively benign form it takes in Canada) simply has no bargaining leverage. He or she is alone in an open plaza, faced with a formidable adversary.

My sketch of Dr. Thomas' social assumptions may be crude, and my assertion of different assumptions may appear dogmatic. The juxtaposition, however, should provoke some reflection, along the lines suggested by John Berger in Ways of Seeing.[1] When counterposed in these rather bald formulations, a whole tradition of social polemic is evoked. Yet without some common reference points on social structure, discussion on "learning in society" risks becoming a dialogue of the deaf.

Let me illustrate my concern by using the case of bankrolling non-educational institutions to promote learning as referred to by Dr. Thomas in his discussion of labour organizations. His approach to objectives and to accountability is particularly interesting.

C) Objectives in bankrolling non-educational institutions

"If you fly enough with the ducks, you'll start to quack"
- advice from a senior trade unionist.

Dr. Thomas says that the government's objective in funding labour education during the late 1970s was to encourage the organized "labour movement" to take a larger role in the management of the economy. Given the climate of wage controls at the time of this decision, it is hard to credit the government with a desire for increased union effectiveness in major decisions. Rather, one suspects that receptivity to government economic initiatives may have been among the expectations. Further, the assumption is widespread that more skills in industrial relations would promote responsible, predictable behaviour among union leaders at all levels, i.e., would assimilate them rather more to the pace of change and the level of discourse of the other major economic actors, namely government and business.

While this sketch of motives may be seen by some as biased, it should be situated in the context of the wider debate on "tripartism". The viability of a junior partnership with government and business was being actively discussed among trade unionists during the mid to late 1970s. Controversy about the appropriate form of labour participation in management of the economy continues today, while the "6 and 5%" programme aims to pull labour's teeth.

If there are ambiguities on the government side about bankrolling labour education, the same is true of labour's objectives in using the funds. In a typical, week-long residential course of the sort supported by such grants, we have at least three sets of learning objectives at play:

- those of the participants
- those of the course leader
- those of the sponsoring union or federation.

While these often overlap, it cannot be assumed that they will. Indeed, I would assert that it is the tension among them which gives momentum and richness to the courses. Let us remember that Dr. Thomas asserts that "Learning is an individual activity" (p.19). A quick glance through labour literature would establish that the labour movement is deeply collective in its orientation and practices. The trade union educator mediates this tension, introjects it in many cases, and brings his or her own goals to the situation.

The relations among participant/course leader/sponsoring union are complicated by the internal political dynamic of the labour movement. This is referred to by Dr. Thomas as a disadvantage, "inescapable, but not always negative". In my view it is intrinsic and healthy. Let us remember that the participants in a union course are electors, and often opinion leaders among their fellow workers or they would not have been delegated to the course in the first place. Let us also recall that the course leader is usually a staff representative, hired by the union officers and directly accountable to them. Thus the normal power dynamic of formal education is inverted in trade union courses -- if push comes to shove, it is the participants whose voice will be heard over the comments of the course leader, however carefully phrased.

Upon reflection, then, the objectives of government might be made more politically explicit, while the objectives of unions are seen in a more differentiated way. Then we can explore more deeply the implications of funding learning through a non-educational institution like a trade union.

D) Learning and power relations

> "What you know about isn't what we need"
>
> - a participant in a steelworker instructor training seminar

The single greatest advantage of a union over a formal education institution as a learning environment is the flow of accountability. In a union course, certification of outcomes is a secondary concern, and hence the power of educators over learners is drastically curtailed. It is partly for these reasons that educational institutions are skeptical about the value of learning that occurs in trade union courses.

Yet anyone who has survived in the institutional jungle of adult education knows that serious battles are often more over turf than over andragogical approach. Some educational providers are repelled by the idea of unions as agents of adult education, because they see worker-learners as part of their own turf. Hence they collide directly with the union decision to "provide for their own educational needs" when subsidies become available, and when the decision is consistent with past practice and current policy.

Trade unions in Canada carry the seeds of a very different education practice from that which still dominates the formal education system. Most trade union educators have little academic training for their functions, most unions are relatively weak in the research and writing resources needed for development of traditional curriculum materials, and most participants are assertive about their learning needs.

The result is a vital, if rather volatile, learning process, which does not lend itself easily to the planning and evaluation processes familiar to government funding officials. In brief, most courses are set up to respond to specific needs, while most evaluation is done verbally at the end of a course. From this spontaneity and flexibility, the school system could benefit enormously.

Dr. Thomas indicates that the trend may be moving the other way, that unions may experience "the need for the type of detachment, or protective distance, that is part of the structures of the formal education system". Let us hope that such sentiments remain limited to only "some leaders" and to only advanced courses, or a powerful source of educational innovation in Canada may be stifled just as it enters the broad arena of educational debate.

I would not wish this defence of trade union education to be pulled out of historical and social context, nor to be generalized into an argument for "contracting out" the functions of existing public education institutions to a network of private agencies. There are times and places where unionism can stagnate, and until the members reclaim control over their instrument it may not provide a healthy climate for learning. Certainly most community colleges provide a more rounded, portable and empowering form of vocational education than most individual employers.

Thus bankrolling non-educational institutions as learning environments may not be the best option for all situations. When the organization is voluntary, and when the learners have power as members within it, this approach does have great positive potential. Thus there are judgements to be made, based on analysis of social institutions, and some explicit framework for such analysis becomes necessary if decisions are to be subject to informed debate.

E) The politics of perception

"There is no neutral education"

- Paulo Freire

For purposes of our discussion, we should rephrase Freire to say that there is no neutral learning. Individuals engage in learning, but not in a social vacuum. They do so in specific historical and economic conditions, as participants in both voluntary and involuntary groups. To make sense of their activity, it is worth articulating an approach to analyzing their social milieu.

In this process of making assumptions explicit, there will be debate. The process of debate is what Marvin Novick[2] has called the "politics of perception", the broad arena of competing social assumptions and social visions within which electoral politics, community politics, trade union politics and sexual politics are encompassed. It is at this level of discourse that much of Paulo Freire's writing has been done, and that the major contribution of Alan Thomas' paper can be found. Let me try to sum up my own perspective in four brief statements, which I hope will follow easily from the remarks I have made so far.

1. Any comment on learning is socially committed

By this I mean that analysis of any kind carries with it value judgements, identification with some social interests rather than others. The point here is that any apparent detachment of learning theory (or "mathetics") from the social context is unlikely to help focus understanding. Rather, it becomes a challenge to uncover hidden assumptions and to specify the involvements and power dynamics which underlie them.

Once the pose of neutrality is dropped, in my view the discussion can be richer, livelier and more responsible. In this sense, the proposition is far from a moral judgement or a political polemic, but is an invitation to a level of dialogue that I consider more rewarding.

2. Social analysis should be the starting point for discussion of learning

In this proposition, I am trying to turn Alan Thomas' approach upside down. For some of us, this may require a period of time walking on our hands, which is difficult to sustain no matter how interesting the new perception of familiar objects may be.

The consequence of this departure point need not be bogging down in elaborate structural analysis or degenerating into ideological confrontation. Rather, it requires indicating the shape of each "limit situation" within which learning occurs, much as a mime can communicate with a few gestures the shape of an imaginary room before beginning to perform within it.

The relation of learning to society in this perspective is dialectical but not bi-polar. Rather than the individual negotiation with the state, we have a web of mediating institutions in which ideas compete for legitimacy as social groups compete for hegemony. It is in this web, in the "thickets of the mind", that the full texture of the learning environment can be made explicit for individuals and for groups of learners.

3. Inequality of learning opportunities implies a responsibility for providers of education

I assume that the production, distribution and consumption of knowledge in contemporary society are unequal. Certainly there is evidence that this is so in Canada, as described in the CAAE/ICEA publication "From the Adult Point of View". Learning is the process by which the individual tests the limit imposed by the inequalities of wealth, power and knowledge.

Society must face these responsibilities as it enters a particularly important period of historical transition, that is, from an industrial to an information society. The increased concentration of power in the hands of "technocrats" and the increasing marginalization of "techno-peasants" raise these issues in stark terms.

4. Membership organizations are the incubators for a democratized learning society

For reasons discussed above, and spelled out by Dr. Thomas himself, voluntary organizations have a unique potential to shape learning in a way that maximizes the "release of industrial energy, imagination and trust", and that minimizes that "possibility of manipulation, deceit and cynicism".

Of course increasing support of learning in membership organizations must go hand in hand with measures to expand their role and responsibilities in society as a whole. In this context, let me close by saying that the single most positive step the Canadian government could take to enhance democratic learning would be measures to encourage voluntary association in community groups, interest groups and trade unions.

NOTES

1. Berger, John, Ways of Seeing. Penguin Books.

2. Novick, Marvin, "A Politics of Perception". Paper delivered at the Symposium "Working Partners - Labour Arts and Media". CLC Working Group. Toronto, April, 1983.

The new technologies ... - perspectives

NEW DIRECTIONS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION: WHAT ARE THE STAKES IN TODAY'S "NEW TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION"?

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NEW DIRECTIONS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION: WHAT ARE THE STAKES IN TODAY'S "NEW TECHNOLOGY REVOLUTION"?

As we observe the attempts that have been made to manage the vast transitional or crisis phase our societies are now going through, we find it difficult to state that the proposals for continuing education contained in the Faure Report of a decade ago are developing well.

On the one hand, there is a continuous, general movement to reduce the concept of continuing education to the strictly institutional and economic dimension of job-related education, upgrading and retraining for adults. On the other hand, most social policies in the field have tended to popularize the reintroduction into both adult and youth education of programmes and learning strategies oriented solely to practical needs to catch up or adapt to the new technological transformations being felt in our labour market and economy. When we observe where most educational research and innovation is occurring today, this is the area receiving the major investments and most institutional support. In this context, it is difficult to say that the long debates, the research, the experiments and the many grassroots representations that lay behind the Faure Commission's recommendations have really been understood and adopted by our society's decision-makers and managers in recent years. Simple observation of reality prevents us from being optimistic on this point. It is really quite a long way from the concept of continuing education to the excessively single-minded desire to make learning among youths and adults respond to the narrow needs of business, thus reducing the amount of time devoted to "a general education"; unduly slowing down acceptance of paid education leave policies; substantially reducing the public resources required to develop informal learning, particularly in education and community life development; restricting the concepts of learning within increasingly narrow formal dimensions and neglecting the wider definition of education that would enable it to include the multiple, diversified kinds of self-teaching skills that are now used by the media and computer related tools outside of traditional schools and institutions; and thus not being concerned with stimulating the qualitative development of this new socio-educational environment in which we are already living, in our information society.

In the rush to train a qualified labour force to get us through a crisis that has only been seen from the economic viewpoint, some people have seemingly tried to redefine education within the industrial-rational-technological model (Bertrand-Valois, 1980)[1] which has prevailed in the West since the industrial revolution of the early twentieth century, rather than developing educational policies and programmes related to the emerging model heralded and made possible by the new technology, the information society and the profound changes we as individuals and as human beings are living through.

Thus, our decision-makers are presiding over strategies that will see us taking the new technological direction and facing the profound reorganization in social relationships that will follow, without considering the importance of simultaneously developing educational strategies to ensure that the new path technology demands leads smoothly to improvements in the quality of human life.

The current "technological revolution", involving the integration and synergistic development of computers, micro-electronics, telecommunications and audio-visual techniques, creates both hope and fear as it begins to transform the economic organization of our society and most of the personal and social habits in our daily lives. On one hand there are fears that computerization will lead to: a decline in democratic participation by citizens; a slowdown in social mobility, loss of qualifications in the labour force and increased unemployment; danger to the private lives of individuals; increasing vulnerability of information systems, thus weakening individual privacy and safety and national sovereignty; and over-consumption of information leading to "mental pollution" that may inhibit the growth of appropriate social and personal imagination. At the same time, there is much hope for the new technological revolution: increases in individual skills and freedom; solutions to the economic and ecological crises; intensification and improvement of the social fabric (local networks in neighbourhoods and communities) and increases in types and quality of interaction among individuals (new interest groups, new forms of solidarity); and the possibility of new decentralized social institutions, more responsible to the grassroots (Proulx, 1982).[2]

The high stakes involved in this "new" society and "new" culture that we have already started to build and study mean that, in my opinion, we should hesitate no longer in taking the new direction called for in continuing education. In many ways, I believe that continuing education can be the cornerstone of the new educational model made possible by the current technological revolution. In my opinion, this new direction involves:

(a) removing the very idea of education and learning from the schools, and extending the concept of learning to all the diverse times and places in which we learn to take each step in life, right from our first breath;

(b) designing and developing social policies in education that will enable everyone, youth or adult, individuals or communities, to follow the new direction of technology at their own speed and for their own enrichment; and

(c) developing the socio-economic support needed to improve the overall educational environment in our societies.

Removing Education from the School[3]

Current and anticipated development in the telecommunications and computer technology are bringing about substantial changes in the traditional design of the "School", in the sense of the social institution responsible for dispensing learning and defining and judging what is educational and what is not.

It is interesting here to note that the public school as we know it today had its roots in the first convulsions of the industrial revolution in the last century. While thousands of families and individuals were displaced from their environment and past lifestyles and turned into residents of "new towns" with a new organization for work and social relationships, at the same time Education was created, with the social mission of encouraging children to break out of their parents' traditional patterns of thought and life and learn the ways of the new society. Learning and education thus became a distinct, autonomous activity, separate from the rest of life and dependent on a third party (or institution) for its definition, operation and control. People went to School to learn that which they were thought not to know and in a context where it was necessary to stand at an objective distance from one's own subjective experience and life history. The traditional socio-educational environment was not appropriate to the educational, cognitive and ethical demands of the new industrial society: new places had to be created in order to develop the new model of the emerging civilization. In a way, we could say that the foundations of what we now call (in an exclusively technological sense) "remote" education were laid by the School and the pedagogical practices that developed with industrial society. In fact, before telecommunication technology arrived, learning and education were defined by the guiding concepts of distancing or separation between the subject and the object and physical distancing between the location of life and work and the location - the institution - of education. One apparent paradox: one of the important forces transforming the concept of education, its practices and the School itself comes from what the new telecommunication technologies and all the media in our society can provide to us remotely - learning methods that eliminate the distance which the traditional School put between itself and its concept of everyday life, including each person's subjective experience. We may imagine that some of the difficulty felt by the School, as it tries to conceive and develop a model for continuing education, comes from trouble it has in relating to the new educational environment growing outside it as a result of the new technology, in many diverse places beyond its control. In the reforms and counter-reforms that rage in education, we continue to perpetuate the idea that learning involves an activity done to the learner (inculcation, leading), while, for at least twenty years, the circulation and dissemination of information has left the Educator faced with the question of how to create conditions so that each person can learn for himself and learn how to manage his learning right there where he lives, in his daily activities (Papert, 1982).[4]

In these many forms, education today is overflowing from the School, where one or more pedagogical and cognitive models are still perpetuated nonetheless, along with information and knowledge that is not enriched by the facts we discover and learn each day through our life experiences and varied occasions when we expose ourselves to new knowledge and information. We might say that the School has not become "literate" in the new educational environment in which "learning" will be a process of communication and exchange from now on.

What, Then, Has Learning Become or Returned To?

Learning is, by its nature, a continuing and permanent process - the process by which we have taken each step along the way of life since we drew our first breath. It is also the transformation that takes place in the brain when a new fact is integrated or a new skill mastered. Learning is an activity of life which, at point of impact, affects every dimension of our being. Thus, the learning activity cannot be isolated from other activities of our daily life.

The corollary of all this is that the activity required to learn something, no matter how sophisticated and specialized, always has as its backdrop the previous or current learning existing within the individual. Whatever the content being learned, I always have, as a support and referent, the general process through which I provide myself with the means to acquire appropriate and personally useful knowledge. If I do not acquire this knowledge, my learning is not complete. Which is another way of saying that all learning that does not become operationally apparent, in some way, has not met its objective. That is perhaps the only real way of measuring the success or failure of the learning activity. This measure will vary from one individual to the next, and from one social environment or historical moment to another. Thus, we can no more compel learning than deliver health. Fundamentally, each of us learns to the extent that we are affected and to the extent that what we are learning is related to that which is familiar to us. From this point of view, the "educator" is never the first and last cause of learning: he is a guide and resource person who comes to communicate and exchange ideas with another individual.

Learning is essentially an interactive process and a place where one encounters "something" different from one's self: the place where one exposes or opens one's self and "confronts" new methods and points of view about the realities of life and the various bits of knowledge that interest each of us. The learning process is also the place for communicating and exchanging knowledge, information or experiences that are different but linked by desires. From this perspective, it is unthinkable to consider the learning activity as a meeting between knowledge and the lack of knowledge:

> One example can illustrate this. We know that most "patients" have been conditioned to believe that the doctor was the only one who knew what was good for their "health". Today we know just how imperfect that way of thinking was (is?!). While medical knowledge is recognized to be effective against physical illness, it is also recognized that concentrating exclusively on the physical aspect will cause us to neglect the role of the psyche and the environment in illness. Thus, we discover that the patient has an important part to play in the conservation or reproduction of his state of health; at the same time we recognize that the patient's knowledge and experience of his health is complementary to the physican's scientific knowledge, and that a cure results from the combination, communication and exchange of information between these two types of knowledge.

Learning is the exchange between someone who already knows something about the object he wishes to study and someone who knows how to guide or assist the other in completing or perfecting his knowledge. Thus, learning cannot be reduced to a linear and logical process. Moreover, it is a process whose effects never end.

Any learning process is an event within a life and we learn from the significant events that life brings to us. While this is common to all types of learning, from the child taking his first steps to someone carrying out scientific research in a university, it is even more true of the men and women swimming daily in the sea of information provided by today's society.

Thus, education is not primarily a "schooling" process or "formal", "professional" learning, but a continuous activity of learning what is necessary for each of us to survive each day. Here we are approaching the full sense of continuing education and we can see that this concept of education differs considerably from the traditional definition. In the same way that industrial (and post-industrial) society generated a centralized and institutionalized design for education and learning, the information and computerized society is generating a design for education that is basically decentralized and disembodied.

The question now is how we can take the new direction in continuing education - how is it possible to generalize this new concept of learning, generated by the current "technological revolution", to all educational activities within and outside of the School?

Creating a New Educational Environment and Helping it Grow

The new direction in continuing education, paralleling the path of current technology is not one that would immediately recognize places other than the traditional School as places of learning. It is not possible to face the high stakes raised by the new information society simply by changing the traditional partners in education. As an example, giving the economic sector an overwhelming voice in technical and professional training in the School will not enable us to suppress the "violence" of the current and future transition towards this "new" society. Instead, we must find an overall social policy for continuing education, based on the interaction between various new partners in an educational environment that no longer has the School as its central point and exclusive source for definitions of education.

If one of the prime conditions that make this new direction in continuing education possible implies that we must revise our traditional philosophy and undertake research and experiments in the new forms of learning and the like, the other condition is that we begin immediately to establish the means, activities and policies which I shall list, in part, below:

1. We "must" begin to create and develop a new educational environment whose definition is not based exclusively on the School, but which includes many other diverse places and opportunities for learning within society. We must create social policies in education that go beyond the narrow fields of both School and business. We must, without denying their specific qualities and requirements, have the institutionalized places of learning (both public and private) associate with the new out-of-school educational environments and define the social functions of the latter in developing and supporting continuing education in particular. We must bridge the false gap between what is "educational" and what is not - the idea, for example, that television had nothing at all to do with education, while its users constantly tried to apply the same methods and the same didactic language to it as they would in the School. Thus, we must bring in new partners that, until now, have been ignored and often looked down upon, to define and develop continuing education policies. These new partners would include, for a start, all the electronic and print media, producers of computer and remote communications technology, software designers and creators of computer data banks, all producers in the "culture industry", urban managers, businesses, unions and employee associations, professional bodies and, of course, community groups, among others.
2. We "must" make educators, social intervenors and researchers aware of the qualitative effects of the media and the new technologies on learning methods and cognitive structures. What are the positive and truly educational effects of television, computers, the print media, electronic games, omnipresent audio-visual and communications displays and the like on continuing learning?

3. We "must" train and plan for new kinds of educators: guides to stimulate, accompany, initiate and support learners at various times and places of learning. How can we learn how to learn to manage the flood of information circulating through our daily lives? What use will be made of private or community computers? How will private or community data banks be produced and managed? How can we learn how to learn to develop pedagogical and interactive for the new information technologies?
   And so on .....

4. We "must" stimulate the growth or support the creation of voluntary associations of media and computer-services users.

5. We "must" develop forms and strategies for two-way communications between the electronic and print media (including television, remote communications, the press and so on) and their users, to make it possible to talk back and reduce the exclusive control now exercised by communications managers and professionals.

6. We "must" encourage and stimulate the creation of original educational projects and services, the multiplication of new private or community places for learning and communications, and the spread of forums for speaking out and offering social criticism.

7. We "must" introduce into technical and professional education and into technological retraining of both adults and youths, in School and in business, real opportunities for reflection and action on the psycho-physiological work environment and methods of reorganizing the work environment introduced by office automation, robotics and the new technologies, among others. The new Taylorism prevailing in the work environment is certainly not a product of the inventiveness and great creativity of efficiency experts and engineers at this point in history.

8. We "must" develop policies for democratizing access to computer and communications tools and to data bank creation and utilization for community and individual purposes. This policy of democratization must be developed as vigorously as policies to democratize access to (traditional) education, if not more so.

9. We "must" maintain and develop specific services within the various public institutions in order to permit the least privileged individuals and social groups access to the information resources, research and training they may need to improve their living conditions.

10. We "must" provide access by the greatest number of individuals and social groups to activities involving "popularization and dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge", the study of human relations, psychology and communications, learning how to develop the "new" mental abilities being discovered by research on the brain and improvements in our knowledge of extraordinary phenomena of consciousness, learning about telecommunications, the study of cosmological and ecological phenomena and facts, improved knowledge of the human body and of Nature, and so on . . . . .

Conclusion

The new technological revolution now in progress must no longer be analyzed exclusively from the economic and technical viewpoint. In it lies the potential for a new culture and a new quality of life for every one of us. The stakes at these crossroads for continuing education are precisely that individuals may have every opportunity to make their own place in the sun, for their own good and for that of their immediate community. This new technological revolution contains the seeds that will make intercommunications and a mutually dependent life possible. But, in order to get there, we must - most of us must - stop thinking that it is only some futurist's dream. It has already begun and Big Brother is not as fictitious as we might wish to believe!

NOTES

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